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*D<sup>r</sup>. John Thomas.*

**LORD BISHOP of ROCHESTER,**

Dean of Westminster and Dean of the most Hon<sup>ble</sup> Order of the Bath.

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*London. Published the 4<sup>th</sup> January 1766 by F. and C. Rivington. No<sup>o</sup> 6 St. Pauls Church Yard.*



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Tho. A. Fredell

THE

SERMONS AND CHARGES

OF THE RIGHT REVEREND

JOHN THOMAS, LL.D.

LATE LORD BISHOP OF ROCHESTER, AND DEAN OF  
WESTMINSTER.

PUBLISHED FROM THE ORIGINAL MSS.

BY G. A. THOMAS, A. M.

HIS LORDSHIP'S CHAPLAIN AND EXECUTOR, AND  
RECTOR OF WOOLWICH, KENT.

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VOL. I.

---

TO WHICH IS PREFIXED,

A

S K E T C H

OF THE

LIFE AND CHARACTER OF THE AUTHOR,

BY THE EDITOR.

---

Published for the Benefit of the PHILANTHROPIC SOCIETY,  
at St. George's-Fields, under the Patronage of his  
Grace the Duke of LEEDS.

---

L O N D O N :

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MR. LUNN, CAMBRIDGE. 1796.

THE  
SERMONS OF CHARLES

CHARLES LINTHICUM, M.D.

JOHN BROWN,  
TO WHICH ARE ADDED, A HISTORY OF  
CHARLES LINTHICUM, M.D.

BY JAMES C. BROWN, M.D.

WITH A HISTORY OF THE LIFE AND DEATH OF

CHARLES LINTHICUM, M.D.

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THE END CHAPTER TO THE HISTORY  
OF CHARLES LINTHICUM, M.D.

BY JAMES C. BROWN, M.D.

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1800

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WITH A HISTORY OF THE LIFE AND DEATH OF

CHARLES LINTHICUM, M.D.

DEDICATION.

May your Majesty always have  
the best of success, and may  
your reign, and posterity, be  
as long and happy as possible,  
and may the world be  
ever the better for your kind  
and wise government.

TO THE KING.

SIR,

MAY it please your Majesty, graciously  
to accept the posthumous works  
of an Author, eminently distinguished  
for many spontaneous marks of royal  
favour.

The best excuse which I can plead  
for presuming to seek so august a pro-  
tection to these Sermons is, that they  
were chiefly preached in the royal chal-  
pel; and that my design in publishing  
them is, to benefit a rising and laudable  
Institution; as well as to promote the  
cause of that holy religion, on which  
your Majesty's example diffuses so au-  
spicious an influence.

A 2

May

May your Majesty's awful reverence to that omnipotent and omniscient Being, *by whom kings reign, and princes decree justice*, continue to be such, as that he may preserve your life, prolong your reign, and prosper your kingdom.

May the cordial regard shewn by your Majesty to the *royal law of love*, the gospel of peace, and the most perfect bond of unity, encourage love, peace, and union, among all your subjects; allay the heats, silence the murmurs, and extinguish the animosities, which, of late, have been so perniciously fomented by factious, infatuated, and sanguinary men, to the danger of your sacred person, the subversion of the constitution, and the disturbance of the public tranquillity!

May the translation of your Majesty from a temporal, to an eternal diadem, for the sake of Britain, and of Europe, be yet remote! And may the intermediate space be signalized by further instances

## DEDICATION.

v

stances of the divine blessing upon your  
Majesty's anxious cares, prudent coun-  
cils, and zealous efforts for the safety,  
dignity, and prosperity of this Church  
and Nation !

So, earnestly and daily, prays,

Your Majesty's

Most dutiful, and

Devoted subject

and Servant,

Maize-hill, Greenwich,  
March 30, 1796.

G. A. THOMAS,

## DEDICATION.

Worthy friends, who have been  
the means of the divine blessing upon me,  
and my various crosses, I thank you cordially,  
and my exertions ought to be freely  
gratified, and I hope you will be gratified  
and satisfied!

So, cordially salutes you,

Yours truly,

W. H. Thompson

Dearest wife,

and second

G. A. THOMAS.

**PREFACE.**

THE following Sermons and Charges are printed verbatim from the MSS. of the late Bishop of Rochester. It is far from my expectation, that these posthumous discourses should exalt the character of one who stood so high in the public estimation: it is equally far from my apprehension, that what is now published, should, in the smallest degree, detract from the well-known and well-merited reputation of the author. But it is my earnest wish, and, I trust, not ill-founded hope, that this publication may serve the cause of piety and charity: of which the good Bishop was a zealous advocate, and an exemplary pattern.

To point out the peculiar excellencies, or comparative merits, of these discourses, might seem an invidious and indecorous anticipation of the reader's judgment. It may suffice to say, that the unprejudiced reader will assuredly meet with what is useful and instructive.

in them all ; and that they are all the genuine offspring of the same fertile and polished mind. He will find the moral duties, and christian graces, urged upon him by the most interesting and persuasive motives ; and the fundamental articles of orthodoxy asserted and vindicated against the specious theories of modern refiners in scepticism and heresy, by the most rational and convincing arguments : he will, in short, be instructed what to believe, and how to act, and conducted by a most agreeable guide into the way that leads to happiness and salvation.

Of the few notes, which it seemed expedient to add, by way of illustrating some passages, which without such illustration were liable to objection or misconstruction, it may be proper to observe, that a subsequent examination of Longinus has confirmed me in my dissent from the author, in the single instance of the note subjoined to page 5, of vol. ii. sermon xxii. I there stated it as highly probable, that the fragment of Longinus alluded to by the learned Bishop, is an interpolation ; and for the following reasons I am still more inclined to that opinion.

There

There is a striking resemblance between the reasoning and eloquence of St. Paul, and Demosthenes; particularly in the transpositions of sentences, changes of time, case, person, number, and gender, and gradations, which so beautifully diversify the style, and give such force and animation to the speeches of these incomparable orators. Now when Longinus was illustrating the beauty and propriety of such rhetorical figures, by frequent examples from Demosthenes, how came he entirely to overlook the almost innumerable instances of such embellishments in the lively style of St. Paul? If he had ever examined the speeches and writings of this divine orator, how could he, with any degree of impartiality, forbear alluding to the celebrated defence before king Agrippa, recorded in Acts xxvi. in which at ver. 8. is one of the happiest transpositions that any writer exhibits? or, to Rom. v. which affords at once an instance both of transposition and gradation, from the first to the sixth verse? or to the seventh chapter of the same elegant epistle, in which by a happy change of person and number, he transfers the invidious charge of moral guilt from his countrymen to himself, and

and thereby avoids the odium which a direct imputation, must inevitably have brought upon himself? See ver. 9—25.

It is, surely, somewhat extraordinary, that so candid a critic as Longinus, should never instance any of the appropriate figures of rhetoric, as innumerable almost in the writings of this sacred classic, as the stars in the galaxy, if he had ever perused them with but common attention. But I cannot help thinking, that it is a conclusion favourable to this inimitable writer, and great apostle, that Longinus was totally ignorant of his sublime productions; for if he had really seen them, he must have admired, and would consequently have quoted them, if, like Agrippa, he had not “almost been persuaded to be a Christian,” for it is the least of his praise, to say, that his speeches and epistles contain examples of rhetoric and logic worthy the perusal and commendation of the greatest critic, and equal, if not superior, to those of the celebrated orators with whom he is supposed to have been classed. But though I agree with St. Chrysostom, that “St. Paul is a more logical

logical and eloquent writer than Plato \*," yet, from an invariable regard to truth, I must dissent from great authorities, in believing the fragment alluded to by two learned bishops †, to be the interpolation of some fabricator of pious frauds.

It may be proper, in the next place, to observe, that in imitation of some modern writers, who have trodden with much celebrity the path of biography, I have endeavoured to render this sketch of the life and character of the late amiable Bishop of Rochester, as interesting as the paucity of incidents would allow, by interspersing some miscellaneous and correlative subjects, adorned with classical embellishments. And though, from a regard to duty, more than any other motive, I have, in the short intervals of leisure, allowed to the parochial minister of a very populous town, engaged in the present work with less provision of materials, than, under more favourable circumstances, might have been

\* Chrysost. Hom. 3. in 1 Epist. ad Corinthios. tom. x. p. 20. edit. Benedict.

† Beside the sermon before cited, see Dissertation 37. of Bishop Newton, on St. Paul's Eloquence.

accumulated, I have omitted nothing within my reach, that seemed calculated to diversify and enliven this biographical sketch. With this view I have endeavoured to expand and illustrate every topic connected with my subject, with such accessories as authors both ancient and modern could supply; and have traversed for things worthy of communication, both in the beaten track and in the unfrequented paths of literature, and have availed myself of certain documents inaccessible to any other hand.

I have it in commission from my ingenious and worthy friend to observe, that the funeral sermon at the end of the second volume, was composed and preached on a very short notice, and consequently with but very little premeditation, and is now printed from an exact copy delivered to me by the author, without any material alteration.

It seems very necessary to mention, in this place, that these volumes were originally designed to be published under the patronage of his grace the Archbishop of Canterbury. In a letter, dated from Lambeth house,

June

June 10, 1794, his Grace writes in answer to my application,—“ To your intention of inscribing the intended publication of your late worthy relation's, and my friend's, sermons to me, I can have no objection: but it may be desirable that we should have some conversation relative to the time of publishing,” &c. &c.

In compliance with this desire, I had the honour of conferring with his Grace on the subject of this publication, when there was no hesitation but relative to the time of publishing, which was then supposed to be, for several reasons, not very favourable to the design: no objection was then made to the dedication. But after printing the proposals, I took the liberty of inclosing them in a letter, and reminding his Grace of his promise; to which I received the following answer.

“ Lambeth-house, March 10, 1795.

“ The Archbishop presents his compliments to Mr. Thomas, and acknowledges the receipt of his letter inclosing proposals for printing the sermons of his late much-respected friend, the Bishop of Rochester, to which

which he will most certainly be a subscriber. But with regard to the dedication, he continues in the sentiments which he stated last summer, and for the same reasons then given, “ and that, without any idea of want of respect to the memory of the Bishop, or unkindness to Mr. Thomas.”

It is as difficult for me, as for the reader, to account for this extraordinary change in the sentiments of the Archbishop: but, as his Grace, with his usual frankness and condescension, has declared, it did not proceed from want of respect to the memory of the Author, or unkindness to the Editor; so, it is hoped, after this explanation, it will be no obstruction to the success of a work solely intended for the public benefit, and therefore inscribed to a personage whose privilege and duty it is, no less than his inclination, to patronize such works, as are calculated to establish civil authority, and social happiness, on the solid and permanent basis of religion. At the same time, I am anxious to declare, that this dedication is not designed to be the medium of soliciting any other favour, than that of being permitted to pay a tribute of homage and

duty to a Sovereign, whom every wise and good subject must love and revere; and at the same time, to confer an honour on the memory of an Author, whom every reader of taste and discernment, must admire and esteem, were it only “for his works’ sake.”

Maize-Hill,  
March 14, 1796.

G. A. THOMAS.

THE

has now been made, giving a clear view of the  
forest, so that the eye can easily follow the  
various paths and the different species of  
trees. The forest is now in full flower, and  
the air is filled with the fragrance of the  
various flowers and herbs.

Difficulties  
met on the way

AMORT A. O.

ANT

THE  
LIFE AND CHARACTER  
OF THE RIGHT REVEREND  
JOHN THOMAS, LL.D.  
LATE  
LORD BISHOP OF ROCHESTER,  
AND  
DEAN OF WESTMINSTER.  
SKETCHED FROM AUTHENTIC DOCUMENTS.

—“ By which also he being dead, yet speaketh.” Heb. xi. 4:  
Old Translation, 1595.

“ Illud certè præfigio, de meis lucubrationibus, qualescumque  
sunt, candidiūs judicaturam Posteritatem; tametsi nec de meo  
seculo queri possum.” ERASMUS.

“ Hunc igitur spectemus. Hoc propositum sit nobis exemplum.”—  
QUINTIL. Institut, I. 10. 1.

ЯВЛЯЮЩАЯСЯ ЧУДОВИЩА  
СВОИХ ТВОРИЦ  
ДЛЯ ЗАМОГИ ИНОЙ  
ЯВЛЯЮЩАЯСЯ ЧУДОВИЩА

ЯВЛЯЮЩАЯСЯ ЧУДОВИЩА  
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ДЛЯ ЗАМОГИ ИНОЙ  
ЯВЛЯЮЩАЯСЯ ЧУДОВИЩА  
СВОИХ ТВОРИЦ  
ДЛЯ ЗАМОГИ ИНОЙ

THE LIFE AND CHARACTER. — 21

Introductions of Bishopric's universal  
prestige to mankind, his useful labours,  
and his death. **THE**

## LIFE AND CHARACTER

OF THE RIGHT REVEREND

# JOHN THOMAS, LL.D.

THE custom of transmitting to posterity the lives and characters of illustrious men, is justly sanctioned by the commendation of the wise and learned of almost every civilized age and country. And so natural, as well as useful, does this custom appear, that even barbarous nations are found to preserve oral traditions of those who have been renowned for courage, virtue, or wisdom amongst them. The utility of a custom so universal and ancient, is hence apparent—that not only a due tribute is hereby paid to the memories of the deceased; but while their exemplary virtues are preserved by monuments which defy the desolations of time, the

XX LIFE AND CHARACTER OF THE

surviving are stimulated to emulation. And when such historical portraits of authors are prefixed to their posthumous works, they are highly gratifying to the curiosity of inquisitive readers, who are naturally desirous of knowing all they can of such writers as have furnished them with amusement or instruction. But they are the best prefaces to those writings which were designed by their excellent authors, to promote the knowledge of religion and the practice of virtue in the world : men being so much the more disposed to the reception of moral and divine truths, when they issue from the pens of those, of whose sincerity they read the strongest conviction ; as they more easily credit good news, when they are persuaded of the veracity of the reporter.

It is elegantly and justly observed by an excellent moralist and biographer \*, that the

history

of mankind is written on the

and inscriptions of nations have been

\* PLUTARCH. The eulogiums given to this admired

author by great and learned men, are innumerable. To

cite them would be endless. The epigram of Agathias,

who flourished about the year 500, deserves to be remembered. It is preserved in the Anthologia, and is supposed

to

history of those eminent men, whose lives he so accurately delineated, served him as a mirror, whereby he learned to regulate and adjust his own conduct, while he transmitted to succeeding generations the most virtuous characters of antiquity. “ For,” says he, “ it is like living and conversing with these illustrious men, when I invite, as it were, and receive them, one after another, under my roof; when I consider how great and wonderful they were \* , and select from their actions the most memorable and glorious.

to be written on a statue, erected by the Romans to his memory. —

ΑΓΑΘΙΟΥ σχολαζικες εις επονος Πλουταρχου.

Σειο τωνεκκλησιας τυπον επονον Χερωνει

Πλουταρχε, κρατερων θνες Αυσσονιαν.

Οτι ταφαλληλαισι βιοις Ελληνας αρισους

Ρωμις ευπολεμοις θριμοσας ενναεισ.

Αλλα τεον βιοιον ταφαλληλον βιον αλλον

Ουδε ουγαραφαις ου γαρ ομοιον εχεις.

“ Chœronean Plutarch, to thy deathless praise

“ Does martial Rome this grateful statue raise :

“ Because both Greece and she thy fame have shar'd,

“ Their heroes written, and their lives compar'd.”

\* The original here is, δοσος ενν, οιος τε † — Q. whether from Homer, Iliad xxiv. 630. Η τοι Δαρδανιδης Πριαμος θαυμαζ Αχιληα, οσσος ενν, οιος τε —

† Edit. Lond. 1723.

Ye Gods ! what greater pleasure ?  
What happier road to virtue ?

“ For my part,” (says he) “ I fill my mind with the sublime images of the best and greatest men, by attention to history and biography ; and if I contract any blemish or ill custom from other company which I am unavoidably engaged in, I correct and expel them, by calmly and dispassionately turning my thoughts to these excellent examples \*.”

To the truth and propriety of these sentiments, every person capable of just thinking, will readily subscribe ; while universal experience confirms the wisdom of this maxim, that the most efficacious method of instructing is by example. But the custom of recording the virtues of eminent men is not only sanctioned by prophane authority, and common experiance, but is also taught by the sacred precept of the wise son of Sirach, by which we are exhorted to “ praise famous men, such

\* Life of Paulus AEmilius, by John Langhorne, D. D. and William Langhorne, M. A.

“ But thou thyself couldst never write thy own ;  
“ Their lives have parallels, but thine has none.”

DRYDEN.

as by their council and their knowledge of learning were meet for the people, and were wise and eloquent in their instructions.”

In each of these respects does the venerable prelate, whose life and character, I have undertaken to write, deserve praise; so eminently, indeed, that no apology can be required for this arduous undertaking; except for the presumption that has engaged me in it. So well convinced am I of the difficulty of this undertaking, that I cannot but call my own judgment and discretion in question†. But such an apology comes too late. It may, however, not improperly be premised, that although the various moral endowments and mental accomplishments, which distinguished the subject of this memorial, render him unquestionably deserving of being “praised among famous men,” and handed down as a pattern for the imitation of the present and future race of mortals; yet it cannot be ex-

\* Eccl. xliv. 11. & seq.

† “Tanta inchoata res est; ut penè vitio mentis tantum opus ingressus mihi videat.” <sup>Op. 100. 1. 1. 10. 10. 10. 10.</sup> Ex Epist. Virgilii ad Augustum de Æneide suff.

xxiv. LIFE AND CHARACTER OF THE

pected, that many surprising incidents, or remarkable anecdotes, should be related of one, whose opinion, so far as was compatible with the duties of his profession, accorded with that of the Augustan poet \* —

Nor ill he lives, who lives and dies unknown." FRANCIS.

Instead of indulging an enterprising spirit, and endeavouring to attract the eyes and observation of the world; he was content to practice those peaceful and humble virtues, which are more suitable to the genius of christianity, and more congenial to the temper of its true professors. And it is much to be regretted that the exploits of heroes and conquerors, are so much more admired by common minds, than the calm and even labours of studious and philosophical men, though incomparably more useful. Of the former it may, almost without exception, be said, that they " have left a name behind them, that

\* *Nec vixit male qui natus moriensque sefellit.*

*HOR. EP. 1. 17. 10.*

*Crede mihi, bene qui latuit, bene vivit, & intra  
Fortunam debet quisque manere suam.*" OVID TRIST.

their

their praises might be reported :” but of the latter, that “ some there be, who have no memorial, who are perished as though they had never been, and are become as though they had never been born \*.” But this must ever be the case, while the imaginations of the bulk of mankind are more alive than their judgments. Hence the courage and prowess of Cæsar displayed in the plains of Pharsalia, are more admired than his mildness and clemency discovered in his tent the night after the victory ; when he resolved to triumph over his own passions as well his enemies, by subduing the one, and forgiving the other. But as my present design is, not to excite the admiration, but to promote the advantage of my readers, it may be prudent to obviate disappointment, by observing that such anecdotes or incidents as are illustrative of the private virtues, or public character of the late amiable Bishop of Rochester ; will form the principal matter of this biographical sketch.

Were it, indeed, in my power, to give a finished portrait of this great original, to paint

\* Eccl. xliv. 8. & seq.

his

XXVI. LIFE AND CHARACTER OF THE

his virtues in their native colours, and display them to the mental eye in the chaste lustre of truth, there could be no doubt of it's attracting admiration from every beholder, who is not insensible to moral beauty. From admiration he would naturally be led to imitation: he would improve and fortify his understanding by the contemplation of those just rules and maxims by which his character was formed; and by diligently applying them to the regulation of his own conduct, he would, in like manner, learn to render his passions obedient to his reason, his reason subservient to his duty; productive of inward tranquillity, and of real and substantial utility to all around him. From viewing him as a christian divine, he would learn to build his hopes of happiness on the solid basis of true religion, endeavouring to acquire those virtues which naturally result from a conscientious practice of it; unfeigned piety, undissembled charity, unshaken loyalty, and unaffected patriotism. From studying him as a writer of a refined and polished taste, of a solid and penetrating judgment, he would learn to distinguish sense from found, grandeur from pomp, and the sublime from fustian and bombast.

bast. He would hence also be led to such justness of thinking, as would enable him to discriminate those actions that are truly great, from such as have only the shew and semblance of greatness; he would learn to emulate those virtues, which though less admired than the atchievements of heroes, are more laudable in themselves, and more conducive to personal and social happiness. In short, from contemplating a true likeness of the great original, he would infer that nothing can be great and glorious, which is not just and good; and that the dignity of all we say, and all we do, depends entirely on the dignity of our thoughts, and the inward grandeur and elevations of the soul. But my present attempt is, to give but an imperfect sketch; and happy shall I esteem myself, if it so far express the most striking and prominent features of the original, as to be recognized and imitated, by those who shall examine it with impartiality. This at least, I may venture to assert, that whatever may be it's imperfections or defects, they will not be aggravated by any intentional deviation from fidelity and truth.

Dr.

XXVIII. LIFE AND CHARACTER OF THE

Dr. JOHN THOMAS, the subject of these memoirs, was the eldest of three sons of the reverend and pious John Thomas, many years vicar of Brampton in Cumberland. He was born October 14, 1712, at Carlisle.

The death of the vicar of Brampton happened in the year 1747, as appears from the following account thereof in a letter from his second son, Capt. Charles Thomas, to his elder brother, in which he speaks in very dutiful and affectionate terms of his lamented father:

“ Whitehaven, 15 Sept. 1747.

“ DEAR BROTHER, I am happy to inform you of my safe arrival from Virginia. I have wrote to my brother George, who, I hear, is at Carlisle. I was acquainted with the loss of my dear father before I left America; which, you may well imagine, gave me no little concern; and especially as you had so much trouble to find his will. I deposited it in the hands of Mr. Thomas Dawson; and wrote to you by him, that you might know where to find it, whenever you should require it: but I hope there

was

was no other loss than that of the time, before you got it. As to the management of the affairs, "I hope you will take them under your own direction, if it is not inconvenient to you ; resting quite satisfied with whatever falls to my lot, being thankful for the education I received from so tender a father."

" I shall not stay long here before my return to America ; but hope to have the pleasure of your correspondence as long as I shall stay. Nor shall my endeavours ever be wanting to keep up the character of the name, while I can distinguish good from evil. I shall only beg my compliments to Lady Blackwell, and am,

Dear brother,

Your's most affectionately,

**CHARLES THOMAS.**

To the Rev. Dr. John Thomas,  
Cavendish-square, London.

This worthy, but unfortunate man, after experiencing all the vicissitudes of fortune, usually attending mercantile transactions, and sustaining great losses by the American rebels, had, about the conclusion of the late colonial war, retired to a small estate in Virginia ;

XXX LIFE AND CHARACTER OF THE

ginia ; where he was not long settled, before he was seized with a malignant quinsy, which proved suddenly fatal to him.—Thus, after escaping the innumerable dangers that are inseparable from long and hazardous voyages in the most perilous seas, he at last fell a victim to those numberless ministers of death, from which there is no escape ; so truly as well as poetically is it said, that,

“ While dangers hourly round us wait,  
No caution can prevent our fate.  
All other deaths the sailor dares,  
Who yet the raging ocean fears—  
While death, unheeded, sweeps away  
The world, his everlasting prey \*.”

The vicar of Brampton was examined for his Bachelor's degree by the celebrated Mr. Addison, and the fifth ode of Horace being the subject, he rendered the difficult phrase *simplex munditiis*, by the English terms, *qua-*

\* *Quid quisque vitet, nunquam homini satia  
Cautum est in horas. Navita Bosphorum  
Poenus perhorrescit, neque ultra  
Cæca timet aliunde fata.  
— sed improvisa lethi  
Vis rapuit, rapietque gentes.*  
HOR. CAR. Lib. 2. Ode 13. l. 13.

kerly neatness, which extorted a smile of approbation from the grave examiner. As it is my intention to diversify this narrative, without destroying its connection, I shall make no apology for subjoining a translation of this beautiful little ode, which I made when under private tuition, and which has the negative merit of adhering more closely to the sense and metrical construction of the original, than any translation (Milton's excepted, which is improperly in blank verse) I have ever yet seen.

## ODE V. Ad PYRRHAM.

Quis multâ gracilis te puer in rosâ  
Pêrfusus liquidis urget odoribus

Grato, Pyrrha, sub antro?

Cui flavum religas comam,

Simplex munditiis? Hęu quoties fidem  
Mutatosque Deos flebit, & aspera

Nigris æquora ventis

Emirabitur insolens;

Qui nunc te fruitur credulus aureâ,

Qui semper vacuam, semper amabilem.

Sperat, nescius auræ

Fallacis! Miseri, quibus.

Intentantata nites. Me tabulâ sacer

Votivâ paries indicat uvida

Suspendisse potenti

Vestimenta maris Deo.

TRANSLATION.

## TRANSLATION.

What slender youth, with liquid odours sweet,  
Courts thee on roses, in some cool retreat,  
Pyrrha? For whom, inconstant fair,  
Bind'st thou in wreaths thy auburn hair,

So simply neat? Alas! how oft' shall he  
Of violated faith complain to thee;  
Of alter'd Gods how oft' complain,  
And, wond'ring, view the stormy main,

Who, by his fond credulity betray'd,  
Hopes thee e'er lovely, vacant, golden maid!  
Unmindful of the flatt'ring gale  
That for a moment swells his sail?

How miserable they, to whom untry'd  
You shine, in all the bloom of beauty's pride:  
The pictur'd storm, I, safe on shore,  
Devote to Neptune's faving pow'r.

Though his father did not far exceed his sixtieth year, and his mother \* scarcely attained even that age, yet the ancestors of Mr. THOMAS were, in some instances, remarkable for longevity: his grand-father, of the maternal line, in particular, whose portrait now in my possession, was painted at the age of ninety, at which uncommon age he is reported to have been able to read without spectacles. He reached the unusual period of ninety-six.

\* Her name was Ann, daughter of Captain Richard and Ann Kelsick, of Whitehaven.

years.

years. Mr. Thomas was, therefore, born with somewhat like an hereditary claim to length of days; which he did not curtail by negligence or intemperance.

The following curious anecdote was lately communicated to me by a lineal descendant from this maternal ancestor. Mr. Richard Kelsick, the great grand-father of Mr. Thomas above alluded to, was captain of a merchantman; and being much experienced in nautical affairs, had the honour of conducting king William's fleet to the memorable battle of the Boyne. From him descended three generations, all of the name of Richard, and all living at the same time, viz. his son, grand-son, and great grand-son, and all captains of trading vessels. The last of these, being the fifth Richard Kelsick, was lost at sea, and was supposed to have been taken by an Algerine privateer, with whom the name of Kelsick perished in the direct and paternal line. This venerable ancestor purchased a pew in the new church of Whitehaven, as appears from the following faculty, literally copied.

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and suffered new annoy'd. M. 1703.  
or misfortune in our time for the  
Whitehaven,

The 22d day of January, 1703.

Whereas the trustees for building the new church at Whitehaven, did fix and settle certain rules on every pew (respectively) in the said church, for the finishing thereof, and did also depute Ebenezer Gale, to receive all money due for the said pews, and for the carrying on the said building; and the said Ebenezer Gale being authorized by his Lordship the Bishop of Chester, to dispose of the said pews to the inhabitants of the said town, This is to certify whom it may concern, that Mr. Richard Kellick, senior, of Whitehaven, hath paid the sum of five pounds ten shillings, in full for the pew number (118). As witness my hand the day and year above written.

EBEN. GALE.\*

*L. s. d.*

*5 10 0*

\* I mention this trivial circumstance, because it is connected with another of rather a curious nature, viz. that four descendants in a right line from the parent stock, of the same name, and the same profession, were observed to sit together in the same pew at church, each inheriting his parent's name and profession, from the first Richard Kellick, about the beginning of the last century.

Mr.

Mr. Thomas being designed for the church, his father determined to give him a liberal education, and accordingly, at a proper age, placed him in the grammar school at Carlisle; in which he made such a proficiency in classical learning, as became the basis of that eminence of character and station, which he afterwards attained. After having, with much credit, passed through this seminary (to which he afterwards was a considerable benefactor, as will be more particularly stated hereafter) he was sent to Oxford, in the year 1730, and admitted a commoner of Queen's College on the 23d November. Soon after his admission into Queen's, he had a clerkship given him by Dr. Smith, then provost, and a great encourager of learning and merit. After having discharged with that propriety, for which he was always remarked, this decent office, and completing his terms, he put on a civilian's gown, and leaving Oxford became an assistant at the classical academy in Soho-square. In this useful situation he acquitted himself so well, as to be recommended to be private tutor to the younger son of Sir William Clayton, Bart. His introduction to this excellent family was the stepping-stone to his

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future elevation. This was such a family as suited his strict principles of integrity and honour. He was not here exposed to the temptations which usually attend such a situation as that of tutor to the son of a great man. He was in no danger of contracting habits of extravagance, affectation, and vanity; nor of conniving at and acquiescing in scenes of vice, riot, and profaneness; nor of acquiring a time-serving disposition, and that abject deference to the great, which frequently renders a man contemptible among his equals, and arrogant to his inferiors. The Clayton family was remarkable for affording a contrast to the dissipation, luxury, and profligacy, of many fashionable establishments both of the nobility, and wealthy commoners. How long Mr. Thomas continued in this excellent family, I am not competent to say with precision, but probably till he had completed his pupil's education. His conduct, however, was so well approved, as to enable him not long after to bind himself still closer to his amiable pupil by matrimonial affinity; his sister, upon the death of her first husband, with the consent and approbation of Sir William Clayton, becoming his wife. For

many

many years Mr. Thomas lived in habits of the closest friendship with his quondam pupil, now brother-in-law. Mr. Clayton, till about the year 1784, when he received a fall from his horse, which proved fatal to him in a few days. This worthy man, who was many years one of the representatives of the borough of Great Marlow, Bucks, where he had an elegant seat and extensive estate, was for some time before he met with the fatal event, addicted to reading the news on horseback. It happened unfortunately, that as he was one day riding thus carelessly, and alone, his horse suddenly fell with him, and pitching on his head with much violence, he received a contusion of the brain; and after lying senseless and motionless for some time, he was at last accidentally discovered by a domestic, and being brought home, and the stupor abated, he was able to give an account of this shocking catastrophe to his afflicted relatives; whose tender affiduities, together with the best chirurgical skill, only served to prolong a painful existence for a few days, when he expired to the irreparable loss of his family, friends, and neighbourhood.

*of his son's  
b 3  
This  
chance*

This gentleman was lineally descended from Sir Robert Clayton, knight, whose family was formerly settled in Northamptonshire: a gentleman not more remarkable for application to business, than his integrity in conducting it; qualities that deservedly procured him equal success and honour. For in 1670, he was nominated to serve the office of sheriff for the city of London, and the same year had the honour of knighthood conferred upon him by king Charles II<sup>d</sup>; who, beside many other marks of his royal favour, even admitted him to some degree of confidence; which, however, he never suffered to diminish his regard for the preservation of civil and religious liberty. In the year 1679, he was elected Lord Mayor of London, which honourable and important office he discharged with universal approbation. He served in one parliament for the borough of Blechingley, in Surry, but was for near thirty years one of the representatives for the city of London, being often returned without either the charge or trouble of a canvass. And about the year 1681, when many great political characters, who were in the real interests of their country, were of opinion, that a bill to exclude

exclude a papish successor to the throne, was the only method to preserve it's safety, he readily concurred with those measures; and not only voted for the bill in the parliament then holden at Westminster; but also seconded the motion for it in that holden the February following at Oxford. An attempt that drew on the hasty dissolution of both those parliaments, and proved fatal to Lord Russel \*, who was the mover of the Exclusion-bill.

The king dying soon after, and the duke his brother, notwithstanding all the efforts

\* About the time when Lord Russel and the other conspirators were prosecuted, it is curious to observe, how the University of Oxford distinguished themselfes, amongst the advocates for the court, by a formal condemnation of twenty-seven propositions, collected out of various modern authors, concerning the régal power. Their Vice-Chancellor was Dr. Jane, who drew up the famous decree in the Convocation, July 21, 1683, in which the above-mentioned propositions were condemned. As a reward for his loyalty, Dr. Jane was presented with the deanery of Gloucester; but he afterwards joined the revolution, which was one among many instances, at that time, of political tergiversation, and gave occasion to this epigram.

Decretum figis solenne, Decanus ut es,

Ut fieres Præses, Jane, refugis idem.

made for his exclusion or limitation, succeeding to his crown and kingdoms; Sir Robert, who knew him to possess an inclination equal to his power of resenting injuries, prudently retired from a public life, and filled up this interval from business with building and planting upon his estate at Marden, in Surry; which from nakedness and barrenness, he converted into beauty and fertility; and to his expence and taste must be ascribed the picturesque and pleasing aspect it has ever since continued to wear,

This elegant retreat proved his security. For all those who had rendered themselves obnoxious by their former conduct, being now become objects of the regal displeasure, his then peaceful retirement was successfully urged in his favour, by one who had a large share both in the design and execution of those infernal projects, and despotic measures.

Having happily escaped this danger, he enjoyed his rural solitude with as much tranquillity as the convulsions of the times would permit; till finding that the arbitrary proceedings

ceedings of the government tended to nothing less than enslaving the consciences, as well as persons, of the people; he eagerly joined, and strenuously co-operated with, those true patriots, who appeared in defence of their civil and religious rights and properties; and ventured the greatest part of his personal estate, which was very considerable, in support of those measures, on which the security and welfare of the three kingdoms so entirely depended. But whilst he was thus contributing to the security of the fortunes of his countrymen, he saw himself in danger of being deprived of part of his own. For being attainted in Ireland, during the residence of the unfortunate James in that kingdom, a large estate of which he was there possessed, was, in consequence of that attainder, seized upon, and put into hands from which it was impossible ever after to recover it.

Upon the Prince of Orange coming over to this kingdom, he was deputed by the city of London \*, to compliment his Royal Highness,

\* The deputies sent by the Common Council to the Prince of Orange on this occasion, were Sir Robert Clayton,

When the tranquillity of the nation was at length happily restored, by the settlement of the Prince and Princess of Orange upon the throne of these realms, he resumed his share in the public transactions; and their majesties, in approbation of his firm and patriotic conduct, appointed him one of the commissioners of the customs; which post he held with unblemished integrity, and unremitting activity, till his decline of life made a quiet secession from public employments now most desirable. His retirement was spent in several well-judged acts of charity and benevolence; his ample fortune enabling his generous spirit to contribute to the relief, not only of a few individuals, but of mankind in general. A noble instance of his munificence was his liberal contribution to the hospital of St. Thomas in Southwark, as appears by the following

ton, Sir Basil Firebrace, Sir William Russel, and Charles Duncomb, Esq. See Rapin's Hist. Vol. ii. p. 781, and Kennet, p. 534.

inscription on the pedestal of the statue there erected to his memory.

To Sir Robert Clayton, Kt. born in Northamptonshire, Citizen and Lord Mayor of London, President of this hospital; and Vice-president of the New Work-house, and a bountiful benefactor to it. A just Magistrate, and brave defender of the Liberty and Religion of his country. Who, besides many other instances of his charity to the poor, built the Girls' Ward in Christ's Hospital; gave first towards the rebuilding this house 600l. and left by his last will 2,300 to the poor of it. This statue was erected in his life-time by the Governors, A. D. 1701, as a monument of their esteem of so much worth; and to preserve his memory after death was by them beautified A. D. 1714.

He died at Marden in Surrey, July 16, 1707, in the 78th year of his age, and was buried in a vault belonging to the family of the Clays, in their chancel of the parish church of

Blech-

Blechingley, under a noble monument of white marble, of the Corinthian order, with suitable decorations: the figures of himself, in his habit of lord mayor, and his lady, standing upon the projection of the base, with that of an infant (their only child) lying between them.

Sir Robert, dying without issue, was succeeded in his estate, first by his nephew William (the only surviving son of Mr. William Clayton, of Bullwick in Northamptonshire), who, in the first parliament of king George I. was elected member for Blechingley, and was returned in all succeeding elections. In the fifth of his late majesty, he had the grant of a baronet's patent. This Sir William Clayton was succeeded in his title and estate by his eldest surviving son, Kenrick \*, who was the father of the present Sir Robert Clayton, his representative, now living at Marden, and of his younger brother Mr. William Clay-

\* Sir Kenrick Clayton died at his house in Hill-street, Berkeley-square, March 10, 1769. He was member of parliament for Blechingley in six parliaments: his son, now Sir Robert Clayton, Bart. was also the other member for the same borough, at the same time with him.

ton above-mentioned ; whose genealogy I have been at the pains of tracing thus far, on account of his near connection and affinity with Mr. Thomas, who afterwards married his sister.

In the year 1741, Mr. Thomas returned to college, and took the degree of B. C. L. on the sixth of March that year. His tutor, at Oxford, was the excellent and learned George Fothergill, D. D. who was elected principal of St. Edmund Hall, in the same university, on the 17th day of October, 1751, succeeding Dr. Shaw the vicar of Bramley Hants. After being long afflicted with an asthma, he departed this transitory state on Sunday, October 5, 1760. The account of his death is thus affectionately related to Mr. Thomas, by his still surviving and most worthy brother, Dr. Thomas Fothergill, provost of Queen's College, Oxford.

DEAR SIR,

I thank you very much for your kind condolence with me, (as well as for other favours) on account of my dear brother ; whose death still greatly afflicts me, though long fore-

foreseen; but foreseen, methought, at a greater distance. He was always so kind to me, so ready to advise me on all occasions, and so watchful over my interests, that I seem quite naked and destitute without him. I have the comfort, however, and a great one it is, to reflect that he was a good man, and believe that he is now gone to reap the immortal fruits of a most innocent, exemplary, and religious life. I dare speak thus of him to you, who knew him well.—I shall beg leave to send you a ring, as a small token of his long and uninterrupted friendship with you, when you come to London; unless you can put me in a way of conveying it to you sooner in the country. My brother Harry, being at a great distance upon his living in Devon, did not come hither upon the late melancholy occasion. I desire my best compliments to your lady and daughter\*, and am,

DEAR SIR,

Your much obliged, and

most humble servant,

THOMAS FOTHERGILL.

Queen's-College, Oxford,  
Oct. 22, 1760.  
Daughter-in-law, Miss Blackwell.

His

His remains were interred at the north end of the communion-table, in the chapel of St. Edmund Hall.—His unaffected modesty (of which I have heard from my father, who was a pupil of his brother's, many singular instances) peremptorily prohibited the erection of any monument to his memory; which, however, will have a durable existence in the minds of many excellent men; and will be perpetuated in his writings, which are a transcript of his life; rational, pious, modest, and in every respect becoming the character of a christian divine. Of these are extant two vols. in octavo. The first consists of occasional discourses, revised and published by himself: the second was printed from his MSS. and published by his brother. The learned editors of the Critical Review for May 1762, after giving a very favourable account of these sermons, devote about two pages of moral reflections to the subject of bestowing ecclesiastical preferments, which, they justly think, are too frequently given without sufficient discrimination, and of which, they think also, this learned and exemplary divine had not his due portion. Of these judicious reflections it may not be unseasonable to trans-

scribe a few lines, being designed as an answer to the stale objection of infidels, that “the testimony and reasonings of the orthodox clergy in favour of christianity, deserve little regard, as coming from men who are evidently interested in it’s success.” “Let a fair comparison,” say they, “be made between the clergy and men of equal abilities in the world, and we believe it will be acknowledged, that they would not have injured their temporal interests, by engaging in any other course of life. On such a comparison it must strike us not a little, to see in every branch of secular business, men of the most contemptible abilities amassing enormous sums, and bequeathing princely fortunes to their families, whilst in the sacred profession we behold men adorned with talents, which would have added lustre to any nation, *starving*, as it is not improperly called, on a curacy, or even where they have been thought tolerably successful, enjoying a bare sufficiency, and leaving a worthy family in distress.

“ Let the infidel then blush to echo this stale objection, or whisper it only to those who are entirely ignorant of the state of the world :

world: let him learn in silence, that it happens, no doubt, providentially, that those who have distinguished themselves most in defence of christianity, have been amongst the inferior and neglected clergy; and let him be told, to his confusion, that we number amongst the ablest advocates of christianity, a Chillingworth, a Hooker, a Leland, a Fothergill."

On the 27th of March 1737, Mr. Thomas was ordained deacon, by the then bishop of Carlisle, at a special ordination holden in the chapel of John the Baptist, within the precincts of the Savoy in the Strand. For the solemn office of a minister of the word of God, he had been enabled, by postponing his ordination till his 27th year, to make due preparation by much previous application to theological studies.—He who has it in contemplation to become a public teacher of religion, and who is conscientiously resolved to discharge with zeal and fidelity, the important functions of the clerical order, should like him, previously and seriously revolve the obligations which it imposes, and the responsibility annexed to it; the temper, disposi-

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tions, and qualifications absolutely necessary; and above all, the motives that determine him to that line of life in preference to another. He ought particularly to feel a conviction of the truth and excellence of the religion which he is to teach; of the dignity of the pastoral function; of the honour of God; and of the importance of that *sacred* trust, which is committed to those who are solemnly and voluntarily dedicated to the service of the church.

The great misfortune that usually attends candidates for holy orders is, that they are, for the most part, little acquainted with society, young, and void of experience. They are generally called to the exercise of the ministry, at a period of life, when their reason has scarcely attained it's proper ascendancy over their passions; when temptations are strongest, and when it is most natural to indulge them: and though they keep the strictest guard over all their actions, yet shall they not escape censure. Their least faults will be aggravated, and their most innocent actions misinterpreted. Sometimes to be agreeable to one, will be to offend another: sometimes they will be accounted too rigid and

bite-

abstemious, at other times too indulging and voluptuous. Hence, especially by infidels and sectarists (both equally interested censors), the attempts that are every day made to weaken the credit and reputation of the clergy, and to fix the brand of infamy upon the whole body, for the miscarriages and indiscretions of a few. But those who are most severe in stigmatizing and censuring the clergy, would do well to consider, whence that disposition arises; and whether it does not discover as much want of sense as of candour, to blame the whole body for the faults of a few? They would do well also to reflect, whether in so numerous a class of men, it is reasonable to expect that none should ever make a false step, or be led to err, by the *deceitfulness of sin*? They should remember, that heaven itself has had it's apostates, and even so small a number as twelve, a traitor. The very best of mortals have their indiscretions, their weaknesses, and failings; nor can the clergy hope, whilst they are men, that they should entirely divest themselves of what is incident to humanity. Let such pretended christians learn candour, even from a heathen, who justly observes, "As every man has his failings, he

is the best who has the fewest\*; and let them remember, that to delight in vilifying the clerical order, is a certain mark, either of ignorance or depravity.

But when Mr. Thomas engaged in the clerical profession, he was further advanced in years, and consequently more mature in judgment, than other candidates usually are. And as it was natural to him to engage in any important concern with great prudence, deliberation, and circumspection, so it is reasonable to conclude, that in entering on this profession, he had previously considered the endowments that are necessary for the successful exercise of it, and the advantages and disadvantages inseparably annexed to it. And as the choice of his profession was not at first marked with precipitation, so it was not followed by subsequent repentance or disgust. What particular office he filled in the church during the interval between his admission to priest's orders I am not able to say, but be-

\* *Nam vitiis remo sine nascitur; optimus ille est, qui minimis urgetur.*

HOR. SAT. lib. i. 3. 68.  
Lieve

lieve, his residence was chiefly in college. This interval, however, was not long; for on Sunday the 25th of September of the same year, he was ordained priest, by Dr. Joseph Wilcocks, bishop of Rochester, at a general ordination holden in the parish church of Bromley in the county of Kent. Mr. Thomas was appointed to preach the ordination sermon, and took for his text Philip. iii. 8.

*Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ*

*Jesus my Lord.*—From the fragment which remains of this appropriate discourse, it was the object of the preacher to shew, *the excellency of the christian religion*; and thence to infer *the excellency of the christian priesthood*. The far greater part of this sermon, in which the latter important branch of it, namely, *the excellency of the christian priesthood*, as treated upon, has unfortunately fallen a sacrifice to time or accident, but the conclusion is preserved, and the exhortation is so forcible and pertinent, as well as so expressive of the genuine temper of the preacher, that a transcript of it may not be deemed improper for insertion in this part of his life.

“ It is indeed,” says the preacher, “ our duty, in the strictest sense, “ to crucify the flesh with the affections and lusts,” and to recommend our precepts by our practice; nor have we reason to fear, whilst our truly primitive prelates are so firmly attached to the interest of religion, and such strenuous opposers of infidelity and profaneness, but that they will always make choice of such persons to serve in the sacred ministry of the church, as will be as sorry to betray, as they will be ready to advance it’s real welfare.

For our parts, let it be our chief care that our morals be irreproachable, and our lives exemplary; always considering that the interest of God, our neighbour, and ourselves, demands this of us; and, that when we shall be entrusted with the care of souls, the conduct of our whole flock will be, in some measure, chargeable upon ourselves. It will therefore, be necessary to have so much firmness and resolution, as to censure vice in whatever shape we meet it; and yet so much humanity as to treat it with delicacy and tenderness, so as to heal, not inflame, the sore. We must be, as St. Chrysostom directs, *χρηστοί οὖν καὶ αὐξητοί*,

auspicio, of a mild and yet severe behaviour; having a gentleness, and yet a dignity in our address. We must also accommodate our censures to the temper and disposition of the offender, and without weakening the force of our reproofs, must propose them with mildness and affection. When divisions and coldnesses creep in among our hearers, we must use our good offices to dispose them to a reconciliation. When sickness, poverty, or distresses of any kind afflict them, we must administer what relief we are able, and exert our honest endeavours to supply the temporal, as well as spiritual wants of those committed to our charge.

A steady and exact performance of these duties, will be indeed to exalt the dignity of our profession, and to *adorn the doctrine of God, our Saviour, in all things*. Let us, therefore, offer up our most ardent petitions to the throne of grace, that HE would vouchsafe graciously to accept this solemn sacrifice, which we are now going to make him, of our persons, our lives, and services.—That HE would supply, by the infinite riches of his

• Tit. ii. 10.

grace, those wants and imperfections, which his all-seeing eye knows we labour under.—That ~~he~~ would illuminate our minds in the explaining of those divine truths with which he has entrusted us—and keep us always so attentive to the dignity and excellency of our function, that neither our natural inclinations for indolence and repose, our pursuit after pleasure, nor the cares and disquietudes to which human life is naturally subject, may make us forgetful of our engagements, or remiss in the conscientious discharge of our duty.—Lastly, that ~~he~~ would make us the happy instruments of advancing his glory, and promoting the interest of that church which Christ Jesus has redeemed with his most precious blood—that his holy precepts may be the only rule of our conduct, that so the sanctity of our morals may always accompany the sanctity of our character. Happy, if when we have thus preached to others, we ourselves may not be cast away \*,—but may be distinguished by that eulogy of our blessed Saviour,—*Well done, thou good and faithful servant, thou hast been faithful over a few*

\* 1 Cor. ix. 27.

things,

*things, I will make thee ruler over many things, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord \**

The promotion of Dr. Herring, (afterwards archbishop of Canterbury) in this same year to the see of Bangor, occasioned a vacancy in the rectory of Blechingley; to which Mr. Thomas was presented by his Majesty George II. through the interest of Sir William Clayton, bart. the patron †; and was instituted January 27, by Dr. Benjamin Hoadley, bishop of Winchester.

During his incumbency on this eligible preferment, which was thirty-six years, Mr. Thomas chiefly resided in the rectorial house, which he enlarged, improved, and embellished, at a very considerable expence, and with equal taste and judgment. He applied himself with alacrity to all the duties of a parochial clergyman, and supported that useful and respectable character with uniform propriety and dignity. In the discharges of these

\* Matt. xxv. 21.

† By customary prerogative, the king has the power of a presentation to a living, when the voidance is caused by the promotion of the incumbent to a bishopric.

duties he was, for some time, faithfully and ably assisted by his brother ; and it might be doubted whether the ministerial function could be more duly discharged, than by the united labours of two such diligent and orthodox pastors. He had afterwards, on the promotion of his brother to a vicarage in Norfolk, for his coadjutor, his ingenious and poetical cotemporary and friend, the reverend William Thompson, author of an elegant poem, in three books, on sickness, and of poems on several occasions \*.

But though his ample income, which was so considerably improved by the large fortune of his lady (whom he married not long after he was presented by her father's interest to the living of Blechingly), enabled him to keep a constant assistant, yet he omitted nothing himself which he conceived might conduce

\* In a copy of these poems, I find this inscription, in the author's own hand.

To

The Rev. Dr. Thomas.

12. VEN. 1744.

— Sive munus amico,

Qui meruit nugas primus habere meas. MART.

W. T.

to

to the temporal or spiritual interests of his parishioners. He seldom omitted to preach, and was ready, on all occasions, to render them any service in his power. He was regarded by them not only as their pastor, but as their friend. He visited them in private, and received his neighbours courteously and hospitably ; and was kind and charitable to the poorer sort of them ; instructing them all by his doctrine, and edifying them by his example. In the whole tenor of his conduct, he convinced his parishioners that his regard for them was sincere and disinterested ; and might with great truth declare to them, *I seek not your's, but you* \*. He well knew that a due degree of disinterestedness is no small recommendation of the clerical character, he therefore studiously avoided all mean or anxious attention, to what he regarded as concerns of a subordinate nature. He never rigorously exacted his legal dues, and during an incumbency of thirty-six years, never resorted to law. Not that these observations are designed to imply any censure of others of the same profession, who have generally shewn themselves so averse to litigation, as even not un-

\* 2 Cor. xii. 14.

frequently

THE DISPOSITION TO GROWTH AND STAG  
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and to avaricious inclination to increase, and of frequently to prefer to it a considerable diminution of their revenues, though often inadequate to the decent maintenance of their families. And how little the clergy deserve that avaricious and litigious spirit which many from a variety of interested motives, illiberally impute to them; one single observation made by an eminent clerical character, out of innumerable others that might be alledged, will unequivocally demonstrate. It is this, viz. "that of seven hundred suits for tithes, brought by the clergy into the court of Exchequer, which is only about one in fourteen parishes, during the space of fifty-three years, from the restoration to the year 1713, six hundred were decided for them \*."

Nor do I fear contradiction, when I assert it as my opinion, that almost, if not quite, one-third of the whole revenues of the English parochial clergy, are withheld from them, by those among the laity, who take advantage of their inexperience of business, and of their general disinclination, and inability to enforce their just claims, by resorting to hazardous, expensive, and sometimes ruinous, litigations.

\* *Archbishop Secker's Charges, i. 129.*

And

And I believe that instances of exactness or rigour in collecting, or compounding for, their tithes, is very rare indeed among the clergy, though perhaps not quite so rare amongst the lay impropriators. For was it not out of compassion to the clergy, that the legislature of the 7th of king William, humanely and wisely interposed by passing an act, entitled *An act for the more easy recovery of small tithes; and the value of them, where the same shall be unduly subtracted and detained* \*?

Far be it from me, however, to intend any indiscriminate reflections upon the lay proprietors: many of whom, I am persuaded, are too generous to enter into competition with a class of men, who, generally speaking, rather deserve their protection, than their resistance.

There is, indeed, a certain sect, who rarely, if ever, pay tithes but by compulsion; artfully making conscience a pretext for unjustly withholding from the clergy, those legal dues

\* See Statutes at large, vol. iii. This act of parliament, was perpetuated by 3 & 4 Anne, c. viii. sect. 14. There is one provision in it, which is in favour of the defendants, i. e. that if the plaintiff be nonsuited, the person sued is to have double costs.

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of which none can entertain any doubt or scruple, but the affected disciples of that divine teacher, who has commanded them to render to all their dues \*, and who, rather than be deficient in the payment of them, wrought a miracle, to enable him to pay tribute to a heathen emperor. This cunning description of rigid formalists is well described by the modest and prudent, but zealous and candid, defender of the rights of the clergy, above quoted, in this just but emphatic language. “ If,” says his grace, “ we have a demand on any of the people called Quakers, we should, if we possibly can, pursue it by that method only, which the act, for the more easy recovery of small tithes, hath provided: and rather sit down with a moderate loss, than do otherwise. For they are a generation, loud in their complaints, unfair in their representations, and peculiarly bitter in their reflections, where we are concerned; unwearied in labouring to render us odious, and surprisingly artful in recommending themselves to the great †.”

\* Rom. xiii. 7.

† Archbishop Secker’s Charges, p. 131.

It

It were devoutly to be wished, that some legislative provision would effectually prevent this odious species of litigation, that *occasion might be cut off from those that desire occasion against us* \*.

I cannot refrain here from mentioning a case, which lately occurred to myself, in confirmation of the opinions that have been above asserted, relative to this evil, which, as it is so apt to set the clergy and laity at variance, calls loudly for legislative reformation.

Soon after my collation <sup>f</sup> to the rectory of Woolwich, it was natural for me to inquire into the emoluments of that living, which I found to be very inadequate to the laborious duty of so populous a parish, it containing about 10,000 inhabitants, and having only one parish church, and my predecessor, who held it thirty-nine years, clearing from it scarcely 100l. a year, after a curate's salary and other out-goings, were discharged. Upon inquiry I found that it had been customary for the occupiers of the better half of the parish, which (passing strange!) is on the Es-

<sup>e</sup> 2 Cor. xi. 12. <sup>g</sup> 1 Cor. 10:14

<sup>h</sup> By the archbishop, the living having lapsed on account of my minority.

sex side of the Thames, to pay the rector 20l. in lieu of the tithes of about four hundred acres of fertile marsh land. This composition I refused; and after continuing to refuse it for two years, in hopes of being offered one more just, I called a meeting of the tenants, and offered to take 4s. per acre in lieu of tithes of land, the average rent of which was about 2l 10s. per acre. Instead of closing with my offer, they treated me with great rudeness and insult. In consequence of this improper behaviour, I found it necessary to apply to my attorney; who, after preparing to go into the Exchequer, at my desire informed these troublesome persons of his readiness to sue for a better composition. The result was, that they appointed a meeting among themselves, and afterwards made a tender of 5s. which, being a shilling an acre more than I claimed, I accepted during the remainder of their leases, not being willing to avail myself of their just alarm.—To return from this digression, which as it may be of use to some of my readers, I hope will be excused by all.

May 25, 1742, Mr. Thomas took the degree of D. C. L. In the year following he

connected his interests with the Clayton family, by marrying Lady Ann Blackwell, daughter of his patron, and sister of Sir Charles Blackwell, of Sproxton-hall, Norfolk, bart. the eldest son of Sir Lambert Blackwell, bart. envoy extraordinary at the court of Genoa, and to the grand duke of Tuscany, in the reign of queen Anne. A copy of the letter of revocation may possibly gratify the curious reader, and therefore I shall here literally insert it.

“ Trusty and well-beloved, we greet you well. Having thought it convenient to recall you from our service in the court of the great duke of Tuscany, and from that to the republic of Genoa, wee herewith send you our letters of revocation to them both, which you are to deliver respectively, accompanying thele to the great duke with such expressions of our esteem and affection to his highness's person and friendship, and those to the said republic, with such expressions of our regard for their friendship and interest, as you shall judge proper. After which you shall make all convenient speed to return into our presence, assuring

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“ yourself of our favour, and gracious ac-  
“ ceptance of the services you have rendered  
“ us in those courts. And so we bid you  
“ farewell. Given at our court at St. James's,  
“ the 24th day of November, 1724, in the  
“ third year of our reigne.

“ By her majesty's command,

“ C. HEDGES.

As a testimony of the meritorious conduct  
of Sir Lambert Blackwell, while he held the  
honourable post of envoy extraordinary to  
the court of Florence, as well as to preserve  
a morceau of antiquity, it seems proper to  
add a copy of an original letter from prince  
Eugene to the Duke of Marlborough.

“ MONSIEUR,

A votre alteſſe eſt parfaitemeſt connue la  
très louable conduite de Monsieur de Black-  
well, Elle ſcait encore le zèle ardent, avec  
lequel il a travillé dans ſon ministere pendant  
le ſejour, qui l'a fait à Florence. Ce n'eſt  
pas la cour d'Angleterre ſeule qui a profité  
de ſes grands talents, mais c'eſt encore toute  
la cause commune, qu'il en a eu des preuves  
bien

bien convaincantes \*, ainsi il mérite assurément la distinction de sa haute protection, pour laquelle il m'a témoigné d'avoir une très particulier vénération : je supplie donc V. A: de ne lui pas refuser ses grâces en toute rencontre qui les pourroit avoir besoin pour ses avantages, et qu'elle me pardonne en même temps l'hardiesse que j'ose prendre par mes prières en sa faveur, estant plus que personne au monde avec respect et passion.

MONSIEUR,  
De V. A.  
très humble et très obéisst. serviteur,  
EUGENE DE SAVOYE."

Gowarde, le 19 Juin, 1705.

For the benefit of the English reader, I will here add a translation of this princely eulogium of an English Envoy.

" SIR, (My LORD,)

The laudable conduct of Sir Lambert Blackwell, is perfectly well known to your Highness, (Grace), as also the ardent zeal with which  
The modern orthography of this word is, *convainquant*.

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he laboured in his administration, during his residence at Florence. It is not the court of England alone that has profited of his great talents : but the whole common cause \* has had convincing proofs of them. He therefore certainly deserves to be distinguished by it's great protection, for which he has proved to me that he entertains a particular veneration. I, therefore, beseech your Highness (Grace,) not to refuse him your favour on any occasion in which he may advantageously avail himself of it ; and that your Highness (Grace) will, at the same time, pardon the liberty I presume to take, by making such requests on his behalf, being with unequalled respect, and affection,

I, SIR, (MY LORD),  
Your Highness's (Graces),  
Very humble and very

obedient servant,

EUGENE OF SAVOYE."

Gowarde, June 19, 1785. To Dubaco gladbuston

\* By the common cause seems to be meant, the triple alliance of the Imperialists, Dutch and English, to preserve the political equilibrium against the ambitious views of France and Spain.

The preliminary circumstances of Dr. Thomas's marriage with lady Anne Blackwell, relict of Sir Charles, son of the Sir Lambert Blackwell above described, are too singular to be passed over in silence. The Dr. had entertained a penchant for Miss G——n, the daughter of the bishop of Ely, and being in habits of friendly intercourse with lady Blackwell, he took an opportunity of requesting her ladyship to inform Miss G——n of his favourable opinion of her merits and person. To this request lady Blackwell frankly replied, that she "should be very happy to render Dr. Thomas any service in her power; but must own she envied Miss G——n such a compliment." This answer, perhaps, might not wholly be unexpected; it was certainly not disagreeable to the Dr. This curious anecdote was related to me upon unquestionable authority; nor does it, in my humble opinion, reflect on the honor of the one, or on the delicacy of the other. For it does not seem probable, that any thing like an engagement had previously subsisted between Dr. Thomas and Miss G——n; and therefore it could not be said, that he had sacrificed honor to interest, by embracing an offer which

might seem more desirable than attainable. Nor could indelicacy be fairly imputed to a lady, who might be supposed to have discovered inclinations to which she alone could, under such circumstances of superiority in rank and fortune, give their proper expression: and in widowhood, with more propriety than in virginity. The result, however, was happy: thus united, they enjoyed an unusual share of connubial felicity for near thirty years.

On the 18th of January 1748, Dr. Thomas was appointed chaplain in ordinary to his late Majesty George II. In 1754, April 23, he was made prebendary of Westminster. In 1760, December 12, he was appointed chaplain to his present majesty. On the back of the lord chamberlain's letter of appointment, under the hand and seal of his Grace the duke of Devonshire, is endorsed this memorandum, as N. B. By the king's order, and without any application.

t b

In

In 1762, Dr. Thomas was appointed Sub-Almoner to his Grace the Honourable Dr. Robert Drummond, Lord Archbishop of York, and Lord High Almoner. By this appointment he was empowered to distribute the several sums of money paid to the Lord High Almoner by his majesty, from the Treasury-Chamber, &c. in daily or monthly alms to the poor. The office of Sub-Almoner is rather honorary than lucrative, the salary amounting only to 97l. 11s. 6s.

On the 7th of January 1766, Dr. Thomas was admitted and instituted by Dr. Richard Terrick, bishop of London, to the vicarage of St. Bride's (alias Bridget) in that city, on the presentation of the dean and chapter of Westminster. To render this benefice tenable with Blechingley, a dispensation was granted by the archbishop of Canterbury, and confirmed by the King, under the broad seal of the lord Chancellor.

In the year 1756, Dr. Zachary Pearce, then bishop of Bangor, had, through the interest of the earl of Bath, and the urgent persuasion of the duke of Newcastle, with real,

though ineffectual, reluctance, accepted of a translation from that see to the bishopric of Rochester and deanery of Westminster. His lordship, however, did not long continue satisfied with his promotion. For, finding the deanery attended with more trouble and fatigue than was compatible with his natural love of ease and retirement, now increasing with the growing infirmities of age, the bishop applied to his majesty, through the introduction of his excellent and faithful friend, the earl of Bath, for permission to resign both the bishopric and the deanery. The circumstances of this intended resignation are somewhat pleasantly and humorously detailed by the bishop in the memoirs of his life, written by himself, and prefixed to his posthumous works. It seems, that there was a difficulty started by a lawyer, high in royal confidence, (lord Northington) about the practicability of resigning a bishopric. This difficulty, however, was found to be not insurmountable; and, in token of the royal consent, the bishop had the honour of kissing his Majesty's hand. So far all seemed to be agreeable to his wishes, consent being given in such a manner, as is seldom recalled. But, unfortunately

tunately for the bishop, lord Bath, as soon as he heard of the king's consent being given, requested him to bestow the bishopric and deanery, which were supposed to be resigned, upon Dr. Newton, then bishop of Bristol. This transfer of patronage from ministers to the crown, alarmed the ministry, who thought as their predecessors in office had always thought, that no dignities in the church should be obtained from the crown, but through their influence. They, therefore, resolved to oppose the resignation, as the best method to prevent a transfer of patronage out of their hands into those of the king. And the lawyer, who first started the difficulty, who had been *doubtful*, and soon after had been *clear*, was engaged to acquaint his Majesty, that he was then again *doubtful* about the practicability of legally resigning a bishoprick, and that the bishops in general disapproved of such unprecedented resignation. His majesty, in consequence of this information, honoured the bishop of Rochester with a third audience in his closet, and told him, he must relinquish the desire of resignation; but added, that he would have all the merit of having actually resigned. The bishop replied,

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plied, "Sir, I am all duty and submission," and then withdrew.

Had Dr. Pearce succeeded in his application, and no objection been made to the proposed translation of Dr. Newton to the see of Rochester, Dr. Thomas would have been promoted to the bishopric of Bristol. This was the ecclesiastical arrangement intended at that time. However that might be, it is clear from the following copies of two quaint and curious letters of Dr. Pearce, that he was desirous of obtaining the bishopric of Bristol for his long intimate friend Dr. Thomas.

Bromley, Oct. 13, 1763.

"REV. SIR,  
As you desired, I send you an account of what has passed in the affair, which you know of, since I saw you.

I dined on that day at lord —'s, and mentioned to him my design of recommending you for the dignity, which his friend might possibly quit; provided, that his lordship had no objection to my recommendation in that case: to which he replied, that he had

had no objection to it, and that I might do as I thought proper, when a proper time was come for it : but he did not give me leave to take notice to the greater person\* of his having recommended for a successor him, whom you and I know of.

Yesterday I waited upon the greater person, who received me with great affability. What passed between us, I do not care to set in writing : but the conclusion was, that having heard what I had to say, he would consider further of it, and advise about it ; and that as soon as he came to a resolution, he would let me know it.

I had no possible opportunity of mentioning you, because I had no leave from the lord to mention, that the lord had recommended one for a successor, because the greater person said nothing of it to me ; and chiefly because it would have been highly improper, as I have not yet gotten the greater person's consent,

You will easily understand the meaning of all that I have written : which I have writ-  
ten

\* The King.

ten

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ten in this manner, out of a caution proper to be used on such occasions. I had almost forgotten to mention, that the greater person assured me, that he would keep the affair a secret till such time as he formed his resolution, and acquainted me with it; and therefore I must depend upon your doing so likewise, as an absolutely necessary thing; and I hope that your name will be mentioned with more advantage, as well as propriety, at my next waiting upon the greater person. I am, as you see, as heedless as usual  
heartily your's, blnow ed

Z. ROCHESTER."

Bromley, Oct. 13, 1763.

P. S. "Upon the whole, I think the affair is doubtful, but the greater person seemed rather inclined to gratify me."

The day after his second interview with the king, Dr. Pearce thus writes.

"REV. SIR,  
Yesterday I waited upon the great person, and obtained his consent to my request. He received

LATE LORD BISHOP OF ROCHESTER. lxxvii

received me with that gracious condescension, which I suppose to be customary with him, having always found it by experience

I mentioned to him what I knew lord B— had recommended by way of translation, and said, that if his recommendation took place, I begged leave to name you as a person proper to fill the see of Br—, without any thing to be held in commendam with it, except what you were now possessed of. He said, that you are an excellent preacher, but said nothing as to his consent or dissent, only, it is understood between us both, that it should still be kept secret.

I believe, that you may conclude, from what passed on the occasion, that my testimony of you will be of use to you, if not on this occasion (of which I do not despair) yet on some other. More particulars I do not care to write in a letter: however, I have written enough to confirm you in believing, that I am your true friend,

and humble servant,

Zy. ROCHESTER.

Nov. 22, 1763.

But

But the same cause which prevented bishop Pearce's resignation, operated to the prevention of the promotion which Dr. Thomas might reasonably expect from such a recommendation to royal favour, viz. ministerial jealousy.

This disappointment, however, which was endured without remonstrance or complaint, was not very long after succeeded by more eligible preferment. An intimation of this was given by the bishop of Rochester, in a letter from Westminster, as follows:

Westminster, June 21, 1768.

"MR. SUBDEAN,

Though I am to see you in the Jerusalem Chamber on Friday next, I thought proper to send you the enclosed, which is a copy of the duke of Grafton's note sent to me this day at noon.

I had called at his door on Friday last, when he was not at home; and on Saturday I sent a letter to him, expressing my earnest desire of resigning the deanery on Midsummer-day. This produced the enclosed, which

to

to me appears very favourable on your behalf.

I remain your faithful friend,

and humble servant,

**ZY. ROCHESTER.**

June 23, 1768. *emt domini mons-ignis b. ad. i. 10  
y. nov. d. 11. d. 2. m. 11. a. 11. h. 11. m. 11. s. 11.*  
“The duke of Grafton presents his respects to the lord-bishop of Rochester, and assures his lordship, that he shall not fail acquainting his Majesty to-morrow, of his lordship's intention, as also that he shall join in good wishes to Dr. Thomas as the successor.”

In 1768, the bishop of Rochester obtained his Majesty's permission to resign the deanery of Westminster, and on the 2d of July in the same year, was succeeded by his friend and sub-dean, Dr. Thomas. This promotion was announced to Dr. Thomas, with great satisfaction, by his quondam pupil, the amiable Mr. Clayton, in a letter dated June 23, 1768.

“Good morrow, Mr. Dean, I sincerely congratulate you on the gracious manner in which the enclosed relates the doing of it;

and

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and shall say no more, but wish you and my  
sister much joy on the occasion, in which my  
dear Louisa sincerely joins. my rismer I

Yours very sincerely &c  
John Smith

We hope to see you to-morrow time enough  
for the drawing-room, which may easily be,  
as I ordered the messenger to be with you by  
eight o'clock A.M. I was afraid of being  
sooner, lest it might hurry my sister. Dine  
with us. I propose writing to Sir Kenrick  
to-morrow night: bring the enclosed, there-  
fore, back with you.

Wednesday night,  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  past 10 o'clock.

The following letter from the same hand  
is such a proof of the esteem which his Ma-  
jesty bore to the character of the dean, with  
also such an instance of discretion and judg-  
ment in bestowing preferment, as ought not  
to be suppressed.

Saturday night, June 25, 1768.

" DEAR MR. DEAN,

I hope you all got well down, and found  
all at Blechingley well. I cannot help telling  
you a conversation that passed between the

lads

k—g

k—g and lady C——te on Friday. “ I saw Mr. Clayton yesterday, and am very happy I could oblige his friend, and am glad to prefer Dr. Thomas, who has so much merit. We shall now be sure, lady C——te, of a good sermon on Good Friday.”

I thought it right to give you this information, that you may take your time: it is very flattering to me, and makes me vain in such a recommendation as, without flattery to you, must do every man honour. I go to-morrow to Harleyford for a day or two to meetings, from which lady Louisa will not allow me to be absent, as she knows of them; though I own, I think she grows more and more uneasy every hour, so much so that I cannot help being in great anxiety: for nobody, that is not well acquainted with her, knows half her perfections\*.

I wrote the following to-day to Marden.

\* It seems that lady Louisa was under some anxiety at that time, from this addition to the superscription of the preceding letter, “ All Well.” The cause of this anxiety seems to be the dangerous condition of her ladyship’s sister, the lady of Philip Rashleigh, Esq. M.P. for Fowey, Cornwall.

“ I congratulate you on Dr. Thomas's promotion to the deanery of Westminster, and particularly on the gracious manner in which his Majesty did it, saying, that he was very happy to have it in his power to reward a person of such merit, and especially as he was so nearly allied to the Clayton family.”

I think this was right, and shall be glad, if it take off a little of that conversation which does no good, and which, I hope, will subside.

I have had a pretty good account from my sister Rashleigh, bleeding twice and blistering, having so far relieved her, that they hope she is out of danger.

My compliments to all friends, and love to my sister and niece, with lady Louisa's best wishes, and I am,

DEAR SIR,

Your's affectionately,

WM. CLAYTON.”

The

The promotion of Dr. Thomas to this dignity was universally approved, of which, if it were necessary, I could here insert many singular proofs from unquestionably authentic documents: but though I may seem to have frequently availed myself of such accessories in the course of this biography, I have omitted all unnecessary use of them, and from innumerable letters and papers have made but, comparatively, a very sparing selection.

The attainment of this preferment could not be more gratifying to Dr. Thomas, than the resignation of it seems to have been to his worthy predecessor. His exultation at the accomplishment of his long disappointed wish, the bishop expressed in the following soliloquy, which probably was written more for his own gratification, than for the applause of critics.

“ The Wish, 1768, when I resigned the  
deanery of Westminster.”

“ From all decanal cares at last set free,  
(O cou’d that freedom still more perfect be !)  
My sun’s meridian hour, long past and gone;  
Dim night unfit for work comes hastening on ;

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In life's late evening, thro' a length of day,  
I find me gently tending to decay :  
How shall I then my fated exit make ?  
How best secure my great eternal state ?  
This my prime wish, to see thy glorious face,  
O gracious God, in some more happy place ;  
Till then, to spend my short remains of time  
In thoughts, which raise the soul to truths sublime.  
To live with innocence, with peace, and love,  
As do those saints who dwell in bliss above :  
By prayers, the wings which faith to reason lends,  
O now my soul to heav'n's high throne ascends :  
Whilst here on earth, thus on my bended knee,  
O power divine, I supplicate to thee :  
May I meet death, when his approach is made,  
Not fond of life, nor of his dart afraid :  
Feel that my gain, which I esteem'd a loss,  
Heav'n is the gold refin'd, earth but the dross."

This little poem was published by the editor of his lordship's works from some miscellaneous manuscripts, and if considered as the effusion of a mind operating in secret, will be admitted to contain a refutation of the vanity that was idly or invidiously ascribed to him for resigning the deanery, viz. the antiquated praise of contempt of wealth and power, and affected seclusion from the world. But while curiosity was so busy in presumptuously assigning such motives for persevering in so

uncom-

uncommon a resolution, and in prying into the inaccessible recesses of the human heart, one who had better pretensions to a knowledge of the real motives that prompted such an earnest and incessant wish of resigning what so many would gladly possess, ascribes it to the laudable desire of more uninterrupted application to the most important pursuits, and of leisure to put the last hand to a learned and useful commentary on the four gospels and Acts of the Apostles \*.

The dean of Westminster is usually invested with the most honourable order of the Bath; of which also he is dean. This order

\* This is classically expressed in the epitaph written by Dr. Thomas, and inscribed on the cenotaph erected to the memory of his friend and patron in Westminster Abbey.

Secessus, tandem, ac otii impensè cupidus,  
 Quò sacris literis elucidandis vacaret,  
 Decanatum hunc abdicavit;  
 Episcopatum, insuper, modò licuisset,  
 Abdicaturus.  
 Absoluto, demum, quod præcipue in votis erat,  
 In Sacrosancta Evangelia, & Acta Apostolorum,  
 Limatissimo Commentario,  
 A laboribus requievit—

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of knighthood, like many others, seems to have originated in a religious institution; it's motto being, **TRIA JUNCTA IN UNO**, which, in the opinion of some learned antiquarians, alludes to the three theological virtues. I think it not impossible, that some allusion was meant to the Trinity in Unity. Mr. Edmondson in treating on this order, observes, that "the learned Camden and Jean du Tillet suppose it to have originated with the old Franks, or inhabitants of lower Germany, with whom Mr. Anstis supposes, the Saxons who invaded England had the same common descent; and who, upon their settlement here, introduced the same method of knighthood. Du Tillet further remarks, that those ancient Franks, when they conferred knighthood, observed many solemn rites. Before they performed vigils they *batbed*, to signify that such as were admitted to this degree should be of a pure mind and honest intentions; be willing to conflict with any dangers or difficulties in the cause of virtue; take care to follow, both in their words and actions, the maxims of prudence; and, on all occasions, religiously observe the rules of fidelity

fidelity and honour, which rites and conditions, according to his testimony, still continued to be practised in England, and from the practice of them, gentlemen were denominated knights of the Bath \*.

The office of dean of this honourable order, is, to assist at all installations, which are performed in king Henry the Eighth's chapel. The dean attends at the altar, then receives of the knights, or proxies, to be installed, their swords; after consecrating which, he administers to those who are to be installed, this oath—

“ You shall honour God above all things: you shall be stedfast in the faith of Christ. You shall love the king your sovereign lord, and him and his right defend to your power. You shall defend maidens, widows, and orphans, in their rights; and shall suffer no extortion as far as you can prevent it: and of as great honour be this order unto you, as

\* For a further account of this honourable order, consult Edmonson's Heraldry, vol. i. Art. *The several orders of knighthood.*

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ever it was to any of your progenitors, or  
others." The dean then restores the swords, with  
this solemn admonition:—

" By the oath you have this day taken, I  
exhort and admonish you, to use this sword  
to the glory of God, the defence of the gos-  
pel, the maintenance of your sovereign's right  
and honour, and of all equity and justice to  
the utmost of your power: so help you  
God \*."

The portrait prefixed to this volume exhi-  
bits the habit, which is a rich rose-coloured  
satin mantle tied with golden knots enamelled  
white; and also the badge, or cognizance, of  
the order, which is a rose issuing from the  
dexter side of a sceptre, and a thistle from  
the sinister; all between three imperial crowns  
placed within the motto of the order, viz.  
**TRIA JUNCTA IN UNO**; the whole of pure  
gold, richly chased, and pierced; which is

\* Neither the oath nor admonition are mentioned in  
Edmonson: they are copied from those used by the late  
dean.

usually worn pendent to a ribbon of like colour with the mantle, placed obliquely over the right shoulder, and brought to the left side; but sometimes the badge is pendent to a golden chain, instead of ribbon.

The elegant habit of this order added to the person of the dean, naturally dignified and graceful; and at the last installation, in the year 1788, though at a very advanced age, he was remarked for performing his part of the ceremonial with peculiar address and adroitness.

Soon after the appointment of Dr. Thomas to the deanery of Westminster, at the earnest solicitation of the honourable Dr. Frederic Cornwallis, lord archbishop of Canterbury, he was chosen his grace's prolocutor to the lower house of convocation. The preceding archbishop had appointed the dean of Canterbury to that office; but on the succession of Dr. Cornwallis, he declined it; the dean of Westminster was therefore, as usual, presented to the upper house of convocation, by Dr. William Markham, then dean of Christ Church, Oxford, in a latin speech, of which

the

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the following extract is an elegant compliment to the dean.

“ *Eā laude (i. e. modestie) commendandum non minus quam integritate, doctrinā et morum simplicitate, virum hunc eximum inveniū: qui si otioso ungendum sit munere, dignitatem saltem ei afferet; si negotioso, facultates. Quod meipsum attinet, lator profectō eum mihi obtigisse præsentandum, cuius amicitiam inter laudes meas pono, & ejus virtutes prædicare possum non ex opinione, sed scientiā.* ”

“ *Hunc itaque vobis præsento ab inferioris domus senatu electum, qui prolocutoris sui in convocatione partes sustineat \** ”

“ *The*

“ *This excellent man, who was afterwards archbishop of York, in a letter dated Oct. 13, 1768, Bloomsbury, thus writes to the dean on the subject of the convocation, &c.*

“ *DEAR SIR,*

“ *I yesterday saw the archbishop, and found him a little distressed, by the dean of Canterbury's excusing himself from being prolocutor of the convocation, though he had accepted it under the late archbishop.*

“ *It*

The new prolocutor made his maiden speech to the upper house of convocation, which is inserted after his second charge, and may perhaps be deemed no contemptible specimen of latinity, when it is considered that the author of it had for many years been totally disused to composition in that language. +.

It was impossible both from your *personal qualities*, and from the rank of your deanery, that you should not be thought of. I mentioned your name, as the most creditable person, and was told that all the bishops who had been spoken to on the subject, had done the same. \*\*\*.

“ I cannot neglect this opportunity of expressing the satisfaction which I feel on your appointment to West-mminster. From the relation which our situations bear to each other, it was of consequence to me, to have a good man in your place: and I can with truth assure you, that there is no man, with whom, in view of understanding, temper, or manners, I would wish to act with, more than yourself.

I am, with compliments to lady B——,

DEAR SIR,

Your most faithful,

and obedient servant,

WILL. MARKHAM.”

† The learned author of the life of the late bishop Horne, has a very curious note on the subject of Latin

But the career of human honour is liable to interruption from those calamitous events, from which no rank, no virtue, no age can plead immunity. The dean had not long enjoyed his unsolicited dignities before the unrelenting tyrant of our nature, demanded the exertion of that fortitude which is greater in the christian than in any other victim of sorrow. To see fidelity torn from his bosom, to feel a separation from the kindest and most

composition: "When," says he, "a man writes in a dead language, he does it at a great hazard: and I have heard this matter carried to such a nicety by an eminent scholar, as to suppose it dangerous, even in Latin composition, to put a noun and a verb together, unless you can find that noun and that verb actually standing together in some native latin writer of allowed authority."

*Life of bishop Horne, p. 50.*

Had the admonition of Horace been regarded, the foregoing note, occasioned by the ingenious Dr. Glasse's Greek translations, had probably never been given to the world.—"In sylvam non ligna feras insaniūs, ac si Magnus Græcorum malis implere catervas."

*Sat. lib. i. ix. 35.*

But where perfection is unattainable, excellence is laudable.

"Est quôdam prodire tenuis, si non datur ultrâ."

*Hor. Ep. i. 32.*

faith-

faithful associate, whom a long participation of the good and evil of this ever-varying scene had so firmly attached to him, is surely to be wounded by the sharpest dart in the whole quiver of adversity. But, after a long succession of prosperous events, it seemed good to a gracious Providence, to visit the object of his favourable regard, with this bitter dispensation. After a tedious and painful illness, in the year 1772, and on the 7th of July, his excellent wife changed this transitory existence for one that is eternal.

How severely this shock was felt, notwithstanding a lingering asthma had given a melancholy warning of the awful change, may easily be conceived from the survivor's affecting account of it to his brother.

Blechingley, July 8, 1772.

" DEAR BROTHER,

" Yesterday between two and three o'clock, in the afternoon, it pleased God to deprive me of the greatest happiness I ever enjoyed, or can enjoy in this world. After many months of pain and anguish, borne with amaz-

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ing fortitude and resignation, with a perfect and proper use of her senses to the last moment, one of the best wives that ever man was blest with, died, reclining upon my breast, without a sigh or a groan; having for many days prayed that such might be her end, and God be praised that it was so! May mine be like it! Her good brother came kindly to us the day before, and took a tender leave before going to bed. Sir Lambert was expected, but might not be in the way when his dear sister's letter arrived: nor did we expect the distressful event so soon by some days. We remain here till the last duties shall be over on Monday next; uncertain as yet how to dispose of ourselves: but for the present I cannot resist the afflicting impressions this place makes upon my mind; and much fear, I shall never more have any comfort in it.

\* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \*  
\* \* \* \*. I can say no more. I pray God bless you and your's, and believe me ever,

Your affectionate brother,

J. THOMAS."

The

The remains of the amiable lady Blackwell were interred in a vault in the parish church of Blechingley, on which the surviving mourner caused these tender lines to be inscribed.

Annæ  
Filie natu. 3tæ D. ni Gul. Clayton Bar. ti  
Quæ primis Nuptijs habuit  
D. <sup>rum</sup> Carolum Blackwell Bar. <sup>tum</sup> ;  
Secundis,  
Triginta propè annis  
(Eheu quam breves !)  
Rev. <sup>rum</sup> Joh. <sup>m</sup> Thomas L. L. D.  
Westmonasterij, nec non Honoratissimi  
Ordinis de Balneo Decanum,  
Hujusq. Ecclesiæ Rectorem :  
Monumentum hoc  
Dilectissimæ Conjugi, et Sibi,  
Tam anteactæ quam venturæ felicitatis  
Haud immemori  
P.  
Vixit Hæc Annos 62. Menses 8.  
Ille \* \* \* \* \*

In the year 1774, June 29, the dean lost his most valuable friend Dr. Zachary Pearce. This great and good man at his death, shewed an undiminished esteem for his successor. Among other friendly bequests bishop Pearce

left

left the dean an antique emerald ring of considerable value, but rendered much more valuable by the affectionate language of the testator.

“ I bequeath to Dr. John Thomas, dean of Westminster, my emerald ring, which I desire him to wear in memory of a friend who truly esteemed him.”

This ring had been bequeathed to Dr. Pearce with the same affection and in the same words, by that great ornament of his country William Pulteney, earl of Bath. This lord Bath was a descendant of the very ancient family of the De Pulteney's, who came to England with the Norman duke William. Of his patriotism, benevolence, and piety, Dr. Pearce, who enjoyed his friendship for forty years, has, in the memorial of himself prefixed to his posthumous works, recorded some memorable instances. “ He was,” says the bishop, “ a firm friend to the established religion of his country, and free from all the vices of the age even in his youth; he constantly attended the public worship of God, and all the offices of it in his parish church, while his health

health permitted it; and when his great age and infirmities prevented him from so doing, he supplied that defect by daily reading over the morning service of the church before he came out of his bed-chamber \*.”

In the November following, Dr. Thomas succeeded his old and steady friend, as the editor of Dr. Pearce’s works observes, “ according to his most earnest wish,” in the bishopric of Rochester. As this dignity, to which the deanery of Westminster, by reason of the scantiness of the episcopal revenues, was it’s usual appendage, was obtained by the royal patronage, it is needless to remark, that it was unsolicited, though not unexpected. So far, indeed, was he from ever discovering any solicitude about the acquisition of preferment, that his whole subsequent conduct uniformly shewed that riches, rank, and power, were no otherwise desirable to him, than as they enlarged the sphere of his active benevolence and unbounded munificence. To his intimate associates, and particularly to his brother,

\* Life of bishop Pearce by himself. See also bishop Newton’s life and anecdotes, p. 40, & seq.

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he was known to declare, though highly sensible of his majesty's favour, that his chief view in accepting this preferment, was to serve the public and his friends. His idea of such ecclesiastical eminence seemed to correspond with that of his much-esteemed friend, the unpresuming and excellent archbishop Secker, which he expresses under an attack of illness in his intended speech to the convocation of 1761. " *Multum habent solicitudinis, non parum forsitan invidiae, veræ delectationis nihil, nisi quoties occurrit (occurret autem raro) insignis benefaciendi occasio* \*."

On taking possession of his bishopric, he found the ancient palace at Bromley in a ruinous and dilapidated condition. The episcopal mansion itself was past reparation, and the grounds about it inelegantly and inconveniently disposed. His predecessor, indeed, allowed what was demanded, which, for the deanery, and episcopal houses both at Rochester and Bromley together, did not exceed the sum of 1,400*l.* On the former he expended considerably more than that sum, and on the latter (viz. Bromley) upwards of three thou-

land pounds, exclusive of old materials. Nor did he display less taste than liberality in repairing and rebuilding, or in disposing and embellishing the episcopal demesnes. His liberal and judicious improvements were obvious to the casual observation of visitors, and are thus handsomely mentioned by the late bishop of Bristol, in his life and anecdotes of himself and friends. Speaking of Dr. Thomas the bishop observes, that "he excels equally in the characters of the gentleman and the scholar, and has a spirit, and taste, and elegance superior to most men, which he has fully displayed in the judicious improvements of his deanery house, and in building a palace and laying out and adorning the grounds at Bromley, not to mention the alterations in the choir at Westminster, which perhaps would have been more approved, if they had been made more according to his plan \*." How ungrateful and unjust then must be a rigid and compulsory exaction of an extravagant sum from the representative of the bishop, who had expended so much money on improvements at Bromley, and at Westminster?

\* Vid. Orat. Synod. p. 84.

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Without seeking a translation, the bishop was contented with his promotion, and happy in striving to adorn it with becoming sanctity of morals, and dignity of manners. Beside the peculiar duties of the episcopal function, which he was anxious to discharge with the utmost regularity and propriety, he made an inviolable rule of preaching frequently in his own parish church, and during his residence at Bromley, of constantly administering the holy Eucharist. The bishop had perceived the good effects of his worthy predecessor's example, and he was not too proud to follow it. And to speak truth, it seems highly proper, that a bishop, whose residence is at so great a distance from his cathedral, should give some more public proof of his regard to social worship, than the celebration of it in his own private chapel.

The regular attendance of the diocesan in the parochial church of his residence, must certainly be an operative and edifying example; and it would be a pity that so laudable a custom should be totally abolished, the utility of which is already more apparent from the effects consequent upon its intermission.

on \*. And it is much to be regretted, that such culpable neglect of public worship in many of the higher ranks, should furnish so palatable a plea for those who most need, but least of all use, this mode of religious instruction. “ For nothing is more certain than that wherever the great and good declare themselves publicly on the side of virtue—wherever they are seen to manifest a zeal for religion, by an exemplary attendance on religious worship, such a conduct is constantly found not only to confirm, but increase the number of the virtuous. The pure lamp of piety, that is a light to their own path, at the same time diffuses its lustre on all around them: and such bright examples in the superior stations of life, by a kind of silent admonition, operate more powerfully, and make a more lasting impression on the public manners, than the most enticing words of human wisdom †.”

\* I was informed by a clergyman, who is an excellent preacher, and has occasionally officiated at Bromley, that the congregation at that church is considerably diminished, both in respectability and number, since the late bishop's death.

† Sermon ii. p. 33, 34.

The bishop, though far from being rigid in demanding his dues, was, however, properly tenacious of those rights and privileges, which it was his duty to transmit unimpaired to his successor. Of his successor, indeed, though it was impossible to foresee who he might be, he seemed never to lose sight, but in every thing he did to keep in view *his* interest equally with his own. It was on this account that he was very cautious in felling timber on the episcopal demesnes at Bromley: and that though he built the palace rather below the usual height of similar edifices, yet he made the walls of sufficient substance to support the weight of another story, should a more ambitious successor aspire to such an addition. It seems a singular circumstance, that a mansion erected by an eminent architect\*, at the cost of 3,100*l.*, exclusive of old

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\* Mr. Shakespear, who, though frequently employed and recommended by the late bishop, was so much in the interest of his nephew, one of the surveyors, that he refused to give his evidence, till served with a *compulsory*, and then he substantiated all that had been alledged in favour of the house being well built, and in excellent condition. A more vulgar, haughty, and purse-proud fellow

materials, when building, owing to the late increase of duties and wages, was considerably less expensive than it now is, should, at the expiration of about 18 years, though very substantially framed, and favourably situated, and constantly inhabited, be pretended to be in a ruinous and dilapidated state. Such, however, was the representation of the surveyors employed in estimating the dilapidations, and on their representation a suit was commenced against the bishop's executors, and after much vexatious and expensive litigation, which cost the writer of this *upwards of 300l.* merely to rebut evidence partially obtained, and as partially admitted in the decision, which was so far favourable to the plaintiff, as that 45l. 2s. was the sum adjudged to be paid by the defendant, in addition to

low than this retired builder, (originally a carpenter) I never remember to have seen. When I called upon him, he did condescend to acknowledge great obligations to the bishop, but, though he seemed to be in a very precarious state of health, he rendered the interview extremely disgusting, by using almost as many oaths as words. His nephew, Mr. A. (now among the *fashionable invalids* at Bath) had the consummate impudence to charge 25l. for taking a ride over to Bromley, to inspect the survey of the dilapidations.—“O tempora! O mores!”

the tender made by him on the commencement of the suit. What is rather remarkable, though the sum pronounced for fell very far short of the prosecutor's demand, and very little exceeded the sum tendered by the executor, yet the latter was condemned in costs. On the equity of such a determination I leave those to decide, who are less interested in this cause than myself. One circumstance, however, is too curious to be omitted: in order to establish the opinion the surveyors had given of the *ruinous and dilapidated state of the house at Bromley*, a commissioner was ordered to attend lady Yates, who, on the part of the plaintiff, was thought a desirable evidence; but the depositions of her ladyship, on oath, were found very unfavourable to their suit, being in effect, if not precisely in words, to this purport—"Having resided with the late bishop the greater part of every year, since the palace at Bromley was built, I should not have known of any dilapidations of these premises, had I not been informed of it by this commission." So partial did the decision appear to a gentleman in court, and perfectly disinterested, that he could not forbear remarking, that "one living bishop was worth

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a hundred dead ones."—Let this obfervation, so similar to an old proverb,—*a living dog is better than a dead lion* \*, teach others, who may spurn at submission to an exorbitant demand, to beware of that duplicity which characterizes too many of the legal practitioners, and (without intending any reflection on an honourable profession), is too frequently exerted to "make the worse appear the better reason †." So utterly at variance did law and justice appear in this not otherwise important cause, that I had once a serious intention of detailing it at large; but a veneration for the great and useful talents, and respect for the character and station, of the party at whose instigation it was promoted, have concurred to deter me from carrying it into execution. Without further digressing therefore, I return to a more pleasing subject,

The bishop added one to the many instances of men who have been peculiarly fortunate in their first marriage, and deeply concerned at it's dissolution, seeking consolation in a se-

\* Eccles. ix. 4.

† Speech of Belial, Par. Lost, book ii, 112.

cond. Such consolation did his lordship seek in a second marriage with lady Elizabeth Yates, relict of Sir Joseph Yates, Knt. late one of the judges of the court of King's Bench. They were married by a special licence at Westminster Abbey, Jan. 12, 1775. And it must be acknowledged, that if his juvenile years were blessed with an extraordinary portion of conubial felicity, his declining days were solaced with the tender affiduities of a woman, whose agreeable person, amiable manners, and intellectual accomplishments, concurred to render the marriage state as happy as a great disparity of age could permit.

The bishop, though twice married, was never blest with the tender relation of father. Each of his ladies, however, brought him a son and a daughter by their former husbands, and to these he shewed a parental affection. The son and daughter of his former wife were just past the helpless state of infancy, when the bishop took them under his fatherly protection; and such was precisely the condition of those of the latter. Of the for-

mer indeed, he left behind him, in 1777, a son, and a daughter, and a daughter-in-law.

mer, one \*; and of the latter, both †, survived their kind benefactor.

In his charge delivered at his primary visitation of his diocese, the bishop congratulates both his clergy and himself on the good order and regularity which generally prevailed, and ascribes the principal cause of it to the diligence, zeal, and activity of his predecessor ‡. To this good order and regularity among the clergy, frequent visitations, if properly conducted, would materially conduce. But age, and it's natural concomitants, for some few years before his death, almost incapacitated the late bishop of Rochester from any laborious duty. For what exertions, either of body or mind can be expected, when a man has passed the natural term of human existence? The bishop, however, was so zealous in the discharge of his function, that he held a general confirmation not long before

\* Sir Lambert Blackwell, Bart. of Easton-house, Norfolk.

† Joseph Yates, Esq. barrister-at-law, and his sister, married to C. Dering, Esq. younger son of Sir E. Dering, Bart.

‡ Charge I. Vol. ii. p. 422.

his last lingering and fatal illness, and continued to preach both at court and at Bromley, till near his eightieth year. The last ordination he was able to hold was for the purpose of qualifying the present editor of his life and writings, for institution to the rectory of Woolwich. He was then (May 8, 1791), only in a state of convalescence, but performed the service with the most affecting and impressive solemnity. In the month of September following, I received rather an alarming account of his lordship's health; in consequence of which, after performing the duty of my parish, I paid a visit to Bromley. On my arrival, being Sunday evening, I found him in a state of greater composure than the express gave me reason to expect, reclining on a sopha, while his lady was reading to him some of the prophecies of the bible. The cause of this severe and painful illness (which at last terminated fatally) was a cold caught by superintending the cleansing of a large piece of water near the episcopal house. The cold chiefly affected one side, and in that part produced very acute pains, which were aggravated by a constant cough. Many symptoms of a dangerous nature attended this disorder,

and Dr. Warren, the family physician, being on a distant tour, Dr. Turton very kindly and generously offered his assistance. The medicines prescribed by this eminent professor of the healing art seemed, at first, to give a very favourable turn to the disorder. In the course of a very few weeks, the bishop was able to renew his favourite exercise of riding on horseback. But, much to the concern of his friends, this short state of convalescence, was unexpectedly succeeded by a relapse, which so much relaxed and debilitated the frame, as to lay the foundation of a violent diarrhoea, of which he never recovered. The bishop, as is not uncommon with men of good spirits and constitution, had an utter aversion to physic. In former sicknesses, which were more dangerous than lasting, and more violent than frequent, he could with the utmost difficulty be persuaded to take the prescriptions of his physician. In the present case, he was rather less averse than formerly; but still entertained a sovereign contempt for physic by whomsoever prescribed. His friends, however, were urgent, and he was as compliant as could be expected. The

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circumstance the most unfavourable to his disorder, was, that whatever medicine tended to alleviate the disease, increased the pain in the side. It was astonishing to observe with what persevering fortitude the bishop struggled with his tedious and obstinate disorder. Though his appetite almost entirely failed him, the palate also having become paralytic, and though his strength daily decreased as the malady advanced, yet he continued to ride on horseback till within a short time of his fast approaching end. And when his strength was inadequate to riding on horseback, so much did he rely on air and exercise, that till even within a few days of his death, he took the air for several hours daily in a carriage. At last his strength seemed almost exhausted, and, with the utmost reluctance, he took to his bed. This, with him, was considered as an awful prognostic of his approaching dissolution. If my recollection serves, he continued to sit up till Saturday the 17th of August. On the morning of that day I called as usual, and was admitted into his study. I found him about eleven o'clock making frequent and painful, but vain and

ineffectual efforts to take some tea, which he swallowed in such very small portions, and with such frequent interruptions, from his almost incessant cough, that it was more troublesome than nutritious. His spirits now seemed to fail him. He was incapable of any continued discourse. In short ejaculations he frequently invoked divine mercy and aid. For some minutes I was left alone with him. It was natural for me to offer what consolation was in my power. When he complained bitterly, I ventured to observe to him, that afflictive as his situation might in one view appear, it was rather enviable than pitiable: for he had every thing to hope and nothing to fear from it. He earnestly replied, "that is exactly my case," or in words to that effect. I then observed, what an alleviating satisfaction the retrospect of his past life must afford him, who had lived so well. He felt and acknowledged the truth of this observation, and added, that "from his earliest recollection he had preserved an uniformity of moral conduct to the present trying hour." What seemed most to affect him, was, the painful reflection of leaving the chief object of his

his earthly affections behind him. He mentioned her in the most affectionate terms, and expressed the most heartfelt agony of the approaching separation from so tender a wife. His long and painful disease never seemed to impair his intellectual faculties, and he had a clear and consolatory apprehension of his impending change. I left him very composed, resigned, and full of the hopes of a blessed immortality. The day following he rose very late: but in the evening was able to read prayers to his family, and to their astonishment, he would positively insist on walking up stairs to bed without any assistance: a servant, however, was ordered to walk unobserved close behind him. But this was his last effort to reach that bed from which he never rose again. He now became quite lethargic. But in the evening he roused himself, and even proposed to take an airing in the carriage. From so strange a resolution, so much beyond his strength, his lady was anxious to divert him, fearing that if he should attempt to put it in practice, he might expire in the carriage, and, of course, expose her, who was his inseparable companion, to the most distressful scene. But though the carriage

carriage was ordered, his lethargy returned before the hour proposed, and no attempt was made. For some days he could not be prevailed upon to see any physician, though his lady urged the propriety of it very strongly. He had now very few waking intervals, and we had reason daily to expect his dissolution. Nothing better could be desired now by himself, or his friends, than a calm and quiet departure. For the two last days he spoke very little, and, as if desirous of uninterrupted meditation, or repose, he would not permit any of his family or attendants, not even his lady, to disturb him by their presence. The last thing he attempted to take, by way of sustenance, was a small quantity of port wine mixed with water. For several days he was sustained by very small portions of liquid aliment. His end being hourly expected, I was sent for by express, before whose arrival I had set out, by a shorter road, to pay my daily visit of duty and affection, and arrived at the palace about an hour before my greatest earthly benefactor breathed his last. He expired, in great composure, about eleven o'clock on the morning of Thursday, August 22, 1793, having completed his

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eightieth year, the preceding 14th of October, 1792. The manner of his death was perfectly agreeable to his wish, expressed in the letter written to his brother on the death of lady Blackwell, " without a sigh or a groan." Thus may fairly be applied to him his own emphatic language—" The temperate and virtuous measure the easy descent of life, with a slow but steady pace ; and after diffusing the warmth of their benevolence to all around them, serenely close the evening of a long and happy day, with that unclouded lustre which promises a glorious rising to immortality \* !"

On reading his will, it appeared, that his lordship had appointed lady Yates and myself his executors. The last bequests of this excellent man were such as kept up the uniformity of his character to his death, and formed a proper conclusion to a life of active benevolence. After dividing the bulk of his fortune among his relations, in such proportions as corresponded with the proximity of kindred, and the expectations he had encouraged, his lordship left the following sums for cha-

\* Sermon xvi. p. 255.

ritable purposes, and nearly in the following words :

To an exhibition for the benefit of two such sons of clergymen of the diocese of Carlisle, as shall for the space of two years have been taught in the collegiate or free-school in the city of Carlisle (wherein my late reverend father and I had our education) 1000l. of my capital stock in the 3 per cent. reduced annuities, the principal being vested in the right reverend the lord bishop of Carlisle, the reverend the dean of the cathedral church thereof, and the reverend the provost of Queen's-college in Oxford, and each and every of their respective successors. The dividends are duly to be applied to the benefit of the aforesaid scholars, from their admission into Queen's-college in Oxford, and their successors, for and during the space of four or seven years from their respective admissions and statutable behaviour therein. In case no scholars should be admitted into Queen's-college from Carlisle school, then the vacant exhibitions are ordered to be filled, for such term or terms, by such son or sons of clergymen of, and in the said diocese as shall have

their education, and be found duly qualified at the public school of St. Bees near White-haven \*.

To the vicar of Brampton for the time being and his successors, a house and premises, situated near the said town, there being no vicarial house.

To the clergymen's widows who were elected and placed in Bromley-college at the time of the bishop's decease, 100l. to be equally divided amongst them. Towards the fund for repairing and keeping in repair the said college, 300l. To the chaplain thereof, 50l. To the twelve poor widows upon his quarterly list at Westminster, 50l. to be equally divided between them. To the six charitable corporations or societies, whereof the bishop was a member, viz. to that for propagating the gospel in foreign parts; to that for promoting christian knowledge; to the corporation of the sons of the clergy; to the society for maintaining and educating the orphans of

\* A similar exhibition the bishop had, during his life, founded for the benefit of two scholars of Westminster-school.

the clergy; to the governors of the Westminster Infirmary; and to the Middlesex Hospital; to each and every of those 100*l.* making together the sum of 600*l.* The bishop also left to each of his servants, who had lived with him one year \*, a suit of mourning and a year's wages, and to the butler 200*l.* beside habits, linen, and clothes. To these bequests several considerable sums might be added, due on bonds and notes from different friends and acquaintances, but by will remitted to them, making in all an integral of about 5,000*l.* sterling.

If these charitable and friendly bequests appear not so large as those of some other rich and munificent testators, it should be considered, that the bishop left behind him many relatives who had reasonable expectations of participating of his benevolence, and so exact and scrupulous was he in satisfying the claims of these, that he left a legacy to a clergyman's widow, who only "claimed to be descended from a sister of his late dear mother †." It should also further be con-

\* But one was disqualified in point of time,

† Mrs. Stockdale.

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dered, that the bishop, in his life-time, had given in charitable and friendly donations, sums at different times, to the amount of near 50,000. as clearly appears from his benefactions, of which he kept a correct account from the year 1743, to the day of his death. If therefore many appear to have been more charitable in testamentary donations, few have been so liberal during their life-time. From the low ambition of posthumous fame the bishop was perfectly exempt, as well as from any ostentation in the various acts of private or public benevolence during his life. And as very few persons, with numerous relations and connections, bestowed so much in charity, as this amiable prelate, so none were ever benevolent and charitable on purer principles, or more disinterested motives. Had the bishop's munificence been more generally known, I should not have dwelt so long upon it; but the light of charity is commanded to shine, though not with ostentatious, yet with exemplary lustre—and of this virtue it may sometimes be truly said,

\* “Paulum sepultæ distat inertiae  
Celata virtus.”—

† Hor. Carm. Lib. iv. Ode ix. 30.

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It was customary among the ancient emperors of the East, to chuse their sepulchral stone on the day of their coronation \*; a custom well adapted to check the exuberance of joy, on the attainment of the highest honour to which their ambition aspired. And such sanctity did the heathens attach to the interment of the dead, that they called it a divine institution, and the law of the immortal Gods †. The Romans particularly had a peculiar deity, who presided over this affair ‡. The Athenians were so strict in the due observance of funereal rites, that they would not admit any to the office of magistracy, who had neglected the sepulture of their ancestors §, and beheaded one of their generals even after he had obtained a victory, for throwing the dead bodies of the slain, in a tempest, into the sea ||. And Plutarch relates, that before they engaged with the Persians, they took a solemn oath, that if they proved victorious, they would bury their en-

\* Dionys. Carthus. de 4. Noviss. Art. 14;

† Eurip. in Supplic. Sophoc. in Antigon.

‡ Plut. Vit. Numæ.

§ Xenoph. Rer. memorabil. p. 587.

|| Valer. Max. l. 9. c. 8.

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mies; conceiving this to be a privilege of humanity, which the bitterest hostility ought not to deny to a vanquished foe. And though some of the ancient philosophers affected to despise any kind of attention to their remains, and the primitive martyrs returned contempt on their persecutors, who threatened them with the want of a grave\*, yet the records both of sacred and profane history afford abundant proofs of the officious piety with which depositaries of various kinds, such as pyramids, cenotaphs, temples, and urns, were provided for the interment of the ashes or bodies of the dead. And though christianity seems to be the only religion which prescribes no funeral rites, yet its silence is no prohibition of any decent respect to the memory of the deceased. The description of the persons con-

\* This was reputed, among the Greeks, one of the greatest calamities that could befall them. Thus when the Lacedæmonians were resolved to subdue the Messenians, or perish wholly in the attempt, to secure their interment in the sepulchres of their ancestors, they bound tickets to their right arms, containing their own and their fathers' names, by which, if their bodies should be indistinguishable on account of the wounds they might receive, their families might be discovered. *Justinus, lib. 3.*

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cerned in our Saviour's burial, the eternal eulogium of that pious and generous disciple who, (by anticipation) embalmed his body with the precious unguent, and the character of the honourable counsellor of Arimathea, have always been deemed sufficient authorities and encouragements for the solemn and decent sepulture of the dead, and to them may be ascribed the general attention paid to this last friendly office to their deceased by the primitive christians \*: And so far was their care in this respect from incurring the reproach of superstition, that it was no small recommendation of their religion to the heathens, who were pleased by their strict observance of a custom so decent, so laudable, so engaging, and so agreeable to the practice of civilized nations †.

For these and other reasons, it may be presumed, a provision is generally made in

\* e. g. Minut. Felix. c. xii. p. 69. Arnob. lib. 5. Clem. Alex. lib. ii. c. viii. p. 176.

† This part of their conduct was so commendable in the opinion of the apostate emperor Julian, that he recommends the imitation of it to his idolatrous high priest. Epist. 49. ad Arsarium.

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the will of a testator for his decent interment. In his last will and testament, however, the bishop of Rochester had made no provision; the duty of his executors in this particular was consequently to be collected from the intimations or directions he might elsewhere have given. In a former will, which was made so far back as the year 1774, and which, though cancelled, was found in the same drawer with that which was of much more recent date, and perfect, his lordship directed his remains to be deposited by the side of those of his first lady. From this instrument it also appeared, that he intended the inscription to her memory, (given above) to suffice likewise for a memorial of himself, by the mere addition of his age and the day of his death. With this direction it was the duty of his executors to comply. The only rule for his funeral was a discreet attention to his rank and station, which being duly considered, the sum of 400l. was proposed by myself, and approved by his surviving lady, as adequate and proper for that purpose. The funeral was ordered accordingly, and the procession, consisting of a hearse and six horses, two coaches and six, with mourners, and the bi-

shop's coach and four, with the carriages of Mr. Yates and Mr. Dering, empty, and other suitable attendants, was conducted with great regularity to the parish church of Bleching-ley, in the vault of which, agreeably to the bishop's direction, his remains were interred. Dr. Vincent, an intimate acquaintance of his lordship's, though on a distant excursion of pleasure, at the time his death happened, was so obliging, at the request of the executors, as to come and perform the last office of friendship, by reading the burial service. The chief mourners were, Mr. Yates and myself.

The bishop, as was before observed, seemed to preclude any monumental inscription by his former will, yet as it appeared from subsequent conversations with his most intimate friends, that his lordship had expressed a wish to have a cenotaph erected to his memory in Westminster-abbey, gratitude to my relative and patron, induced me to order a marble monument with a bust of his lordship, and suitable emblems and appropriate declarations, to be placed in the niche parallel with that of his right reverend predecessor, re-  
served

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served vacant, as it was said, for that purpose. This monument is executed by that ingenious sculptor Mr. Bacon, who has been so happy in copying a picture of the bishop painted by the late eminent Sir Joshua Reynolds, as to have the animated production of his chisel challenged by several of his friends, on the most accidental and cursory view of it. The monument is not yet put up in the abbey, but the tablet contains the following inscription, which if not an elegant, is at least a grateful tribute to the memory of my venerable patron.

M. S.

*Viri admodum reverendi Johannis Thomas, LL.D.*

*Episcopi Roffensis hujusque Ecclesiae*

*Honoratissimique Ordinis de Balneo*

*Decani.*

*Pueritiam in schola Carliolensi bene acta,*

*Ubiorem scientiae fructum*

*Apud Oxonienses collegit;*

*Unde, ingenio, moribus, literis humanis, reconditissime,*

*Ornamentum ac patronus prodiit :*

*Famaque exinde increbescente, et suaptè pervulgata,*

*Dignitates merendo ornabat,*

*Divitias largiundo augebat,*

*Ecclesiam consilio gubernabat,*

*Auctoritate tuebatur*

*Exemplo decorabat.*

LATE LORD BISHOP OF ROCHESTER. CXXV

In negotijs impiger, studijs indefessus,  
Omnia ad opusq[ue]um referebat: n[on] solum laboris  
Donec, vita[m] muneribus recte perfunctis,  
Atroci morbo diu oppressus,  
Invicta tamen patientia,  
Animum Deo reddidit.

XX°. Sextilis A. D. MDCCXCIII.

ÆTAT. LXXXI.

Hoc inane munus,  
Hoc desiderij (exiguum licet) testimonium  
Præstare contigit Nepoti suo

1796 G. A. T.

Net long after the bishop's death, the following elegant inscription appeared in the Gentleman's Magazine for October 1793.

To  
John, Lord Bishop of Rochester,  
Dean of Westminster,  
and

Dean of the [honourable] Order of the Bath

This Cenotaph is inscribed.

In memory of a Prelate,

who,

Unrelated by temporal distinctions,

Possessed an Apostolic "meekness of wisdom,"

and

and

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and

Proved himself a worthy disciple of his blessed Master,  
By conformity to the precepts of his Gospel;

Dignified by humility,  
Ennobled by beneficence,  
and

Consecrated by true piety to the service of the Church :  
His ministry formed a model for the Priesthood of  
every order;

While suavity of manners,  
United with urbanity of heart,  
Constituted as amiable an exemplar in  
Domestic life.

Hence

His loss was deeply felt within his own  
Mansion,

And his death widely lamented  
By the numerous participants of his bounty.

But, let Religion, let Humanity exult,  
That he lived to support their interests so long ;  
That he was matured in virtue, and in years ;  
That he afforded a venerable instance

Of the universal esteem and admiration  
In which a good man may live,  
And a still more illustrious proof;

Of the ease with which a Christian can die:

---

His lordship was in stature rather above  
the middle height, standing about five feet  
eleven inches. In the early part of life he  
was slender, and of so delicate a constitution,  
that

that his father used to say, he was propped up by art and medicine. But as he advanced to maturity, his constitution acquired strength; yet he never increased to any degree of corpulence. His figure was elegant and manly, and its dignity comported with the natural elevation of his mind; at all times inspiring respect and veneration, but particularly when he was engaged in any of the sacred offices of religion, which he always performed with such a devotional ardour and fervency, as seemed to add a peculiar sanctity and spirit to the native gracefulness of his appearance. His countenance was the faithful index of his soul, open, placid, and benevolent. His features were regular, and generally softened with the most gracious smile of complacency and benignity.

His intellectual abilities were above mediocrity, and the endowments of nature were improved by the application of art and study. He had a lively and chaste imagination, a quick apprehension, a sound and penetrating judgment, and a retentive memory. He excelled equally in learning, science, and the polite arts. He was an adept in music, and

a con-

a connoisseur in painting. He was, in his earlier days, perfectly acquainted with the practice as well as theory of music; having been a performer upon two difficult instruments. For this agreeable art he entertained a passion to his latest days. He was a great lover of antiquity, and well skilled in the knowledge of coins and medals, and of these, as also of prints and paintings, he left valuable collections; the two former he gave to myself, and the latter, consisting of a great variety of the finest originals, by Italian, Flemish, and Dutch masters, he directed to be divided equally between his lady and myself, some few and valuable ones excepted, which he had previously given to lady Yates, or such as came to him by lady Blackwell, which latter he bequeathed to her son; but, in the opinion of the attorney employed on the part of lady Yates, not in language sufficiently categorical. The bishop, in his will, after bequeathing the emerald ring as a small token of respect for his grace the archbishop of Canterbury, disposed of the valuable pictures in question, in the following words—

“ Also of the pictures that came to me by  
“ my late dear spouse lady Blackwell, beside  
“ those

" those I have herein given to her only son  
" Sir Lambert Blackwell, Bart. I further  
" desire his (whose, but Sir Lambert's?) ac-  
" ceptance of the two Salvator Rolas, one  
" on each side of the chimney-piece in the  
" drawing-room in the deanery-house, the  
" pool of Bethesda by Rubens, the two gar-  
" den scenes by De Koning, on each side the  
" door, the four large pictures (viz.) of Se-  
" neca (*dying in the bath*) by Luca Jordano,  
" of St. Cecilia by Carlo Dolce, of the  
" dutchess of Valentinois by Gennato, and of  
" Bathsheba by Parmegiano, together with  
" the two holy-family pictures by Rubens  
" on each side the chimney in the anti-room,  
" leading to the said drawing-room." What  
made the bequest still more obvious was, that  
clear and legitimate inference from the pre-  
mises in the following clause, viz. "The rest  
of my pictures at the deanery and at Brom-  
ley-house, except those of needle-work or  
drawings by my dear wife Elizabeth, I give  
and bequeath to her and my nephew G. A.  
Thomas, as being chiefly purchased, at differ-  
ent times, by myself." The fair and plain  
inference from which seemed to be, that those  
pictures which originally came by lady Black-  
well,

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well, were designed very properly to revert to her son; but those that were purchased, were entirely at the disposal of the purchaser. Such was the inference that, in my humble opinion, followed necessarily from the premises, but not being able to satisfy the quirks and quibbles of the attorney before alluded to, a reference was determined to be made to the archbishop. Accordingly I immediately waited on his grace, who, with that ingenuousness which strongly characterizes this most worthy metropolitan, frankly declared to me, that he had neither any intimation nor expectation of any pictures whatever by the bequest of his friend, the bishop of Rochester; but added, that he should like to have a copy of the will, which I very cheerfully sent him, confiding in the clear judgment and inflexible integrity of such an arbitrator. His grace after examining the will, returned in answer:—

Lambeth-houſe, Oct. 25, 1793.

"REV. SIR,

"I am ashamed that the favour of your letter, accompanied by a copy of the will of

LATE LORD BISHOP OF ROCHESTER. EXCEP

my much-respected friend, the late bishop of Rochester, has been so long unacknowl-  
ledged.

Having now read the whole Will carefully, and compared the different parts of it respecting the pictures, I am so clearly of opinion, that none of them were designed for me, that I beg to be thought no more of on that subject.

Indeed, I have not the least doubt, but that they were bequeathed by that passage of the will, which has been considered as of doubtful interpretation, to Sir Lambert Black-  
well—to whom I beg my compliments and thanks for his candid reference of the matter, to my consideration. Your obliging atten-  
tion to me also demands my thanks, which I beg you will accept.

I am, Sir,

Your humble servant,

J. CANTUAR.

To return from this digression to the sub-  
ject of these memoirs, the bishop had given  
b 2 proofs

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proofs not only of a good taste for the fine  
arts, but also of a sound judgment and much  
critical acumen. But from a modesty, which,  
by his own account, was almost excessive \*,  
he was ever reluctant to display his talents in  
any way, except when called upon by pro-  
fessional obligation. The sagacity of bishop  
Pearce, however, penetrated this veil of mo-  
deity, and rendered his discovery of concealed  
and various erudition subservient to his post-  
humous fame. That veteran in critical learn-  
ing, who was very exact in every attention  
to his literary reputation, would not commit  
the publication of his posthumous works to  
the sole direction of Mr. Derby, though a  
gentleman of no mean literary attainments,  
without enjoining him, by the following  
clause of his will, to advise and consult with  
Dr. Thomas—" I give and bequeath to the  
Rev. John Derby, my nephew and chap-  
lain, my right to the copies of what I have

\* — fateor enim, quod ex ipsa fatebitur oratio,  
me neque ea quā par est doctrinā munitum; nee dicendi  
copia præditum, nec usu promptum, nec animo satis erectum;  
verum enimvero naturali quodam, & sepe in-  
decenso pudore impeditum, turbatumque

Vid. Orat. Syn. p. 456.  
asrig had qnld id. anckm. d  
dloq. a d caused

LATE LORD BISHOP OF ROCHESTER. XXVII

caused to be printed, that of Longinus excepted, all my MSS. sermons, and all my other MSS. particularly what I have drawn up on St. Paul's 1 Ep. Cor. and what I have for many years past been preparing upon the four Gospels and Acts of the Apostles.—And my will is, that what I have prepared with regard to both of them, be delivered to him for the printing them, if thought proper, he advising with, and consulting on that head, DR. Thomas, dean of Westminster, and having in what he shall do therein, a strict regard to my reputation, and to the interest of our holy religion.” This confidence was the result of that high estimation in which bishop Pearce held the character, both literary and moral, of his successor, as appears from the subsequent letter, written from Ealing, Jan. 12; 1770. *estu ew afoqles radio nI* *noi oI bico* *egs moJiJi vldaslor ad or sevlalnq sonon* *ritos* “ **GOOD M.R. DEAN,** *ni oIft boribulnoo* *ba* “ Your letter of the 23d ult. (to use Cicero's words, or rather Brutus's to Cicero, Epist. 16.) “ nullā me novā voluptate affectit; non sōlū *hūm enim usitatum, sed etiam quotidianum* est, aliquid audire de te, quod pro nostra dignitate fideliter atque honorifice dixeris aut *seceris.*”

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scenes." Here is Latin for you, but it is good Latin, and expresses the sentiments of an English heart as truly, as it did that of a Roman.

"I most sincerely wish you health and all manner of happiness through this year, upon which we are entered; and that succeeding years may be copies of the present to you and your good lady, to whom my wife and I send our best respects, and to Miss Blackwell.

If you are desirous to know the state of our health, it is, that we are both pretty well, as well as the severe weather will permit us to be. Such parts of our hands and feet, as have formerly suffered by the gout, are now a little affected by the high winds and cold season. In other respects we may pronounce ourselves to be tolerably well, our age considered, she in her 67th, and I in my 80th year. But here we go on calmly in life, and I may say with Horace, "Quid verum atque decens, cura et rogo, et omnis in hoc sum;" and perhaps I may add, "Condo, & compono, qua mox depromere possim."

Yours affec. & Hoy. Epist. H. 1, v. 11, 12.  
yours

But,

" But, to tell you a truth, I think that I have, in my searches about the sense of the four Gospels and the Acts, found reason to differ often and so widely in some passages from former commentators, that I am almost afraid to publish my thoughts upon them, and inclined to suspect, that I, a single person, am mistaken, rather than they, a multitude.

" I send this letter to you by Mr. Prichard, whom I expect here this morning with Mr. B——y, who is to be instituted to the vic<sup>e</sup> of G——h. I am,

MR. DEAN,

Most sincerely,

Your friend and humble servant,

ZY. ROCHE<sup>r</sup>.

The above citations, from one not prone to flatter, will be admitted as an authority for ranking Dr. Thomas foremost among the literati of his age; and on such unquestionable testimonies, rather than on my own opinion, I have all along been desirous of estimating both the literary and moral character of my patron and relative, " His salem ac-  
cumulum donis, et fungar inani Munere".

\* Vir. Aen. 7. 885;

h 4.

But

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But his chief merit was, that he invariably strove to render the various learning which he had acquired from an early and continued application to the study of the best authors, both in ancient and modern languages (in which he was very competently skilled) to the illustration of the sacred writings, and the diffusion and advancement of religious knowledge. And though, in the pulpit, he avoided any needless ostentation of learning, yet, if critically examined, his sermons afford simple proofs of a vigorous understanding improved by successful application, and many traces of profound erudition, which enabled him to deliver himself on a variety of interesting topics with justness of reasoning, precision of sentiment, and perspicuity of language. And his style has such a simplicity, elegance, and terseness, and occasionally, such an appropriate grandeur, energy, and pathos, as are the happy result of the assiduous exercise and attention of a comprehensive and cultivated mind\*. In his discourses for the pulpit he

\* The late much celebrated Mr. Gibbon has given a neat definition of style, in his memoirs, viz. "The

was always desirous of correctness, making frequent transcripts, and very rarely delivering any without written notes. Of this, however, he once told me a striking exception. Being engaged to preach a charity sermon, and another for Good-Friday, about the same time, and copies of both lying together on his desk, he took the latter instead of the former, and did not discover his mistake till he had entered the pulpit. He had, fortunately, however, retained so much of the sermon proper for the occasion, as, by a little extemporaneous supplement, to acquit himself without embarrassment, and to the complete satisfaction of a large and respectable audience: which must be considered as an instance of a prompt and retentive memory, as well as of a happy presence. Extempore preaching, however, was far from agreeable to him, nor do I know whether on any occasion he voluntarily adopted so hazardous an

style of an author should be the image of his mind." Vol. i. p. 145.—A definition not very dissimilar to that of Dr. Blair, who defines style, "A picture of the ideas which rise in the mind, and of the manner in which they rise there." Lect. x. p. 181, vol. i. ed.

experi-

experiment \*; being always desirous of that classical purity of diction, which is acquired only by frequent and much composition †; and in which the written has a decided advantage over the spontaneous oration. The main drift of the bishop's preaching was utility, and therefore he invariably chose for the subject of his discourse, something of real importance to the religious and moral im-

\* How hazardous this experiment may sometimes prove, appears from the very unsuccessful attempts of that great master of language and theology, archbishop Tillotson, and of Dr. Sanderson bishop of Lincoln, though remarkable for an excellent memory, and a clear and logical head, to whom king Charles I. paid this handsome compliment, when only plain Mr. Sanderson, viz. that "he carried his ears to hear other preachers, but his confidence to hear Mr. Sanderson." See Birch's Life of Tillotson, and Biograph. Brit.

† It was Cicero's opinion, that to speak well, it is necessary to write much—"Caput autem est, quod (ut vere dicam) minime facimus (est enim magni laboris, quia plerique fugimus), quam plurimum scribere."—*De Orat.* "Augustus," says Ferguson, "was so desirous of correctness and accuracy in all his compositions, that he never delivered his mind on any serious matter, even in his own family, without memorials or written notes." Rom. Hist. The fluent Cicero had also occasionally recourse to written documents, when he was particularly desirous of accuracy.

provement

provement of his hearers, studiously avoiding what ever was not agreeable to the form of sound words, nor good to the use of edifying. Accordingly, he very rarely touched on matters of doubtful disputation, which by discussion are apt to minister questions, rather than godly edifying, and to excite a wrangling disposition, and distempered zeal, rather than that *faith which worketh by love*, and is the vital principle of true goodness. But such objections and difficulties as could not escape observation, and struck at the very foundation of religion, such as the sophists of old furnished against St. Paul's doctrine of the resurrection, these he thought proper occasionally to answer and explain. Thus in his 22d sermon, which is a beautiful illustration of the sublime and fundamental doctrine of christianity, he very ably and acutely defends the reasoning of the apostle, and exposes the sophistry of the sceptic; adapting his arguments to the learned by logical deductions and critical allusions, and to the illiterate by the familiar experience of the unlettered peasant, who is a frequent witness to the mysterious process of vegetable renovation, which is so apt an illustration of the human

human resurrection \*. But all metaphysical subtleties, trifling conceits, bold flights, gaudy figures, forced allusions, redundant quotations, minute criticisms, fulsome, quaint, or coarse expressions, and all rhetorical flashes of a jejune wit, or low fancy, which so frequently debase extemporaneous effusions; all these he sincerely despised, as beneath the dignity of the pulpit, and adapted only to fanatical declaimers and enthusiastic pretenders to

\* Should the scandalous publication, most fallaciously entitled "The Age of Reason," ever meet the christian reader's eye, let me recommend to him the serious perusal of the sermon above alluded to, for a refutation of such senseless and trite cavils to St. Paul's doctrine of the resurrection, as are newly vamped up to deceive, by an air of novelty, the unwary and inexperienced reader, who can alone be in danger of contagion from so scurrilous, unprincipled, and dogmatical a plagiarist, as this illiterate and contemptible scribbler must appear to every competent judge. Such a production shews the hardness of folly, and that "fools rush in, where angels fear to tread." I hesitate not to say that it is my opinion, that this audacious borrower from the exploded writings of Hobbes, Spinoza, Bayle, Voltaire, Tindal, Collins, Morgan, Mandeville, Bolingbroke, and Chubb, must have instantly sunk into oblivion, if the spirit of that faction, of which he is the tool, had not given him an ephemeral *notoriety*, which, he arrogantly flatters himself, will pass with the world for lasting fame.

extraor-

extraordinary illumination. As the gospel was intended principally to be preached to the poor, he cautiously guarded against philosophical disquisitions, and scholastic phraseology, and those abstracted reasonings and refinements, which are unintelligible to many, and unprofitable to all. Though accustomed frequently to preach before learned auditors, yet he judiciously considered, that as every audience is of a mixed nature, so, effectually to apply his matter to the edification of *all*, it was necessary to clothe solid and weighty arguments, in neat and simple expression. He not only studied to deliver sound doctrine with order, connexion, and propriety, but so as to affect the hearts, enlighten the understandings, and ameliorate the morals of his auditors; never courting popularity, nor ever being diverted, by vanity or conceit, from the true end of preaching; but uniformly endeavouring, that all personal considerations should be absorbed in a deep sense of the solemn function in which he was engaged. All controversial subjects he carefully avoided, impressing on his mind the same sentiment which a well-known character in the history of this country

country. \* ordered to be engraven on his tomb,  
—“ *Disputandi pruritus ecclesiarum scabies.*”

*The itch of disputation is the bane of the church.*

The strain of his preaching was rational and evangelical. From an early introduction into the polite world, and an extensive acquaintance with most descriptions of men, he had uncommon advantages of knowing human nature

\* Sir Henry Wotton, who in 1623, had the provostship of Eton-college given him, and in consequence of it was ordained deacon. This preferment he held till the day of his death, which happened in Dec. 1639. He was buried in the chapel belonging to the college, and in his will, to express and perpetuate his detestation of controversy, ordered this epitaph to be engraven on his tomb.

“ *Hic jacet hujus sententiae auctor, Disputandi Pruritus Ecclesiarum Scabies. Nomen alias quere.*” i. e. “ Here lies the author of this sentence, *The itch of disputation is the scab of the church. Seek his name elsewhere.*” He was also the author of a curious and far-famed definition of an ambassador, which almost lost him the esteem of his royal patron James I. viz. *Legatus est vit bonus peregrinus ad mentendum Reipublicae causam.*” “ An ambassador is an honest man sent to lie abroad for the good of his country.” The word *lie* was the hinge on which the conceit turned; yet was not so expressed in latin as to bear the harmless construction intended. But Galper Scipio plus, a zealous papist, and of a malicious temper, printed it in a book

nature in all its diversified forms, relations, and dependences: it was hence he learned what motives would prevail most with different minds, and by what avenues moral and religious truths would find the readiest access. Without such a knowledge of human nature, and of the particular characters, opinions, dispositions, and humours of those whom he addresses, a public teacher will in vain expect complete success from his professional exertions. It was not however, from ethical

a book published against king James, and made an impudent jest, written in an album on a journey, be credited as a principle of the religion professed by that king and his ambassador—and so credulous is superstition, that in Venice (whither Sir Henry was then going ambassador) it was written on the glass windows, and imputed to the author in so obnoxious a manner, that he was obliged to write two apologies in latin, one to be dispersed in Germany, and another to be sent to the king, de Gaspe Scioppio. After his death, were published "Reliquiae Wottonianæ," Mr. Cowley honoured him with an elegy, or rather a panegyric, as appears from these encomiastic lines—

What shall we say, since silent now is he  
 Who when he spoke, all things would silent be?  
 Who had so many languages in store  
 That only Fame shall speak of him in more.

Cowley's Works, fol. edit. 1693.

specu-

speculations, or secular wisdom, that this christian orator expected success. Like a wise master-builder, he laid his foundation deeper—not merely in an acquaintance with moralists, philosophers, and rhetoricians (proper as these may be for erecting an elegant superstructure on a solid basis), but in a familiar, accurate, and comprehensive knowledge of those inspired writings, which are *profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect* \*, and amply furnished with the means of accomplishing the purposes of his sacred embassy. By such a knowledge of these *lively oracles* as rendered him *a scribe instructed unto the kingdom of heaven* †, he was well qualified to inculcate the great scriptural truths of christian redemption, and so to convince men of the necessity of faith, repentance, piety, and virtue, and of renouncing *all ungodliness and worldly lusts*, more effectually, than if he had employed all the tropes and figures, all the logic and rhetoric of the schools, and his *speech and preaching had been with enticing words of man's wisdom* ‡. From those

\* 2 Tim. iii. 15, 16.

† Matt. xiii. 52.

‡ Cor. ii. 4.

inexhaustible fountains of true wisdom, the holy scriptures, he drew such affecting representations of the nature of man, as to persuade him seriously to revolve his present condition and future destination, to consider what he *is* at present, a frail and perishable being; and to look forwards to what he *must* be hereafter, happy, or miserable, to endless ages. Hence he was led to make frequent and apposite citations of scripture, for the proof and illustration of any important point of moral duty, or religious obligation. His method was, not to load his sermons with an indigested heap of scriptural quotations, which, from perpetual recurrence or misapplication, too frequently disgust, rather than edify; but by judiciously blending such as were analogous to the subject in hand, with pertinent reflections, useful hints, plain, sensible directions, short, nervous, striking sentences, and awaking questions, successively introduced with propriety, grace, and energy, he rendered his addresses from the pulpit inexpressibly affecting, convincing, and persuasive. Far, however, was he from neglecting the common duties of common life; but then, in imitation of his divine Master and his apostles, he

taught and enforced them by sanctions peculiarly christian. His custom was, invariably to combine the conclusions of reason with the dictates of revelation; to establish moral duties on christian principles, and to enforce the performance of them on christian motives.

On the great festivals of the church, he always discoursed, with comprehensive brevity, on such evangelical topics as were suitable to the occasion: and, as the faithful steward of the mysteries of God \*, he might say to his flock, in the language of the great apostle, *I have not shunned to declare unto you the whole counsef of God* †. He omitted no occasion to maintain the peculiar characteristic doctrines of christianity; but these he explained with perspicuity, asserted with dignity, and inculcated with such warmth and earnestness, as shewed him to be convinced of the necessity and utility of them, considered as the most effectual instruments of moral virtue, directly tending, in their right application, to purify the hearts and regulate the conduct of men.

\* 1 Cor. iv. 2. † Acts xx. 27.

LATE LORD BISHOP OF ROCHESTER, CALVII

The great object to which his efforts were uniformly directed was, to unfold the glorious prospects of christianity, and, by solemn and pathetic exhortations, to engage men steadily to "pursue both the *means* and the *end* of a dispensation, which had infinite *goodness* for it's motive, and infinite *wisdom* for it's direction \*." Though he constantly taught the necessity of moral goodness, yet he at the same time shewed the inefficacy of such motives as were founded on the amiableness of virtue, and the abstracted fitness of things—"motives which yield but a feeble support to the mind in the day of adversity, and have been justly exclaimed against as more shadowy than substantial †." Imperfect, superstitious and even inhuman, as were the religious institutions of the heathen philosophers, he did not invidiously deny them the praise of extending the line of reason beyond it's usual limits, or of erecting some noble structures of civil polity and moral virtue even upon the very ruins of human knowledge. But excellent as their moral systems appeared, when contrasted with their religious principles, he considered them as affording too evident a

\* Sermon xvii. p. 270.

† Ibid. 305.

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demonstration of the sublime heights to which the human faculties can soar in theory, and how low they fall in practice, when their utmost attainments are but “ laws without sanctions, precepts without authority, and rules without restraint \*.” From these and other like considerations, and especially from the utter inability of those great masters of human reason, to attain to any kind of certainty or congruity on points the most interesting to human happiness, he naturally inferred the necessity of divine revelation, as alone adequate to satisfy the anxious inquiries of accountable creatures into the perfections and attributes of their Creator, and his motives and designs, so far as they had relation to the duties and conduct of mankind. Hence he deduced this important conclusion, “ that the proper time was come for a general revelation of those saving truths which Christ died and rose again to establish ; when the very nations, who valued themselves so much on their high attainments in knowledge, and the polished manners of civil life, as to account the rest of mankind barbarians—appear to have retained such unbecoming sentiments

\* Sermon xix. p. 304.

of the Deity, and such superstitious modes of worship, as differed little from those of the most uncultivated savages, except in the pomp and splendor of their temples and their ceremonies.—Both, indeed, worshipped *they knew not what*—the time was now come, when they might learn to *worship the only true God in spirit and in truth* \*.”

To those who boast of being able to collect the will of God, and consequently the duty of man, from the natural constitution of things, and profess themselves advocates for natural religion in opposition to revealed, he put some questions most difficult of solution, e. g. “ Will any one maintain, that the genuine principles of that law, which would have shewn mankind what God and nature required of them, were ever so universally known, as to need no clearer direction, no stronger enforcement, than every man found in his own natural reason? Did the same pure and spiritual worship of God—the same enlarged benevolence to man—the same motives

\* Sermon xvii. p. 269.

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to virtue, and the same sanctions obtain in any part of the world, as since Christ came down from the Father of lights to enforce and reveal them!—We have seen, indeed, some beautiful systems of natural religion delineated, and raised in our own time, and the main principles of duty supported with much ingenuity, and strength of argument.—But whence did these celebrated productions derive their chief excellency? If from reason alone, without any assistance from revelation, why did we not gather as lovely fruits from the diligent cultivation of ancient wisdom \*?"

It was, however, far from his intention to aim at weakening the principles of natural religion, or to disparage the duties that result from it; but he saw, with detestation and abhorrence, the insidious design of modern refiners, who affect to establish unfair distinction between natural and revealed religion, and to *put asunder* what the God of nature *has joined together*, the great principles of religious and moral obligation. To men of this description, who are ever attempting to sub-

\* Sermon xlii. p. 397.

vert the only sure foundation of human *duty*, and human *hope*, *revealed religion*, by invidiously imputing to philosophy, or to the improvements in the arts of civilization and policy, what ought to be conceded to the benevolent spirit of christianity, he puts these plain but perplexing questions:—“But, is not this to mistake the effect for the cause? and to suppose, that the principles of true religion have no part in the institutions, no influence on the manners, of a civilized people? If nothing was ever wanted to establish a general sense of humanity, but civilization and sound policy, whence was it that, in the celebrated states of Greece and Rome, soils that produced much philosophic virtue, such modes of cruelty were *authorized* and practised, as, in *these* days, would strike a religious mind with horror? Whence was it that they, with all the learning, the arts and embellishments of life, not only connived at, but gave a *public sanction to*, customs directly repugnant to the laws of nature itself? If the laws of humanity were so far superseded by those of conquest, that they were not ashamed to sport with the miseries of their captive fellow-crea-

tures, could the unfeeling barbarity of savage life itself do more \* ?

It was not, however, to individuals only, that he urged a serious attention to the sacred dictates of christianity; he knew how useful and necessary an associate, a pure system

\* Sermon xli. p. 381. The preacher, in these several passages, alludes to cruelties and barbarities unparalleled in these days, wherever christianity has made any progress; e. g. *legalized gladiators, the exposure of newborn infants, killing their aged parents, and leading in triumphal procession their captive enemies.* For a true picture of the heathen world, we need only consult St. Paul's 1st chapter of his celebrated Epistle to the Romans. The idolatries, impieties, vices, and enormities of countries the most celebrated for learning, science, and civilization, Egypt, Greece, and Rome, afford the strongest proofs of the superiority of revelation over reason, as the basis of morality and virtue.—Indeed, to the necessity, as well as utility, of revelation, ancient history is the most faithful witness.—What pity that any other testimony to proclaim a truth should be required in these enlightened times! And yet the infatuated people of France afford a living and awful testimony to this solemn truth, that no civil polity can be permanently or securely established upon any other basis than that of religion; while confusion dreadfully illustrates the necessity of order, and the destructive effects of a visionary philosophy fatally evince the superiority of revealed truth.

of

of religion is to a just and well-constituted form of civil government, and therefore took every opportunity of recommending it to the care of the civil magistrate. After shewing religion to be the only sure basis of social harmony, and on which alone can be securely raised the firm and lasting fabric of public good, he advises the politician to take religion for his guide, and see whither it will lead him. “ Does he wish to maintain the authority of law ; to secure a due respect to the person of the magistrate, and a proper sense of subordination among the several offices, ranks, and stations ? Religion prepares and disposes the hearts of men to second these views ; puts them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers ; to obey magistrates ; not to *speak evil of dignities*, nor to *think more highly of themselves than they ought to think, but to think soberly* \*. Is he anxious to supply the various exigencies of government, and to provide for it’s defence against external attacks ? Religion asserts and vindicates his claim : commands to *render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar’s* †—to *pay tribute to whom tribute is due* : custom to

\* Rom. xiii. 3.

† Matt. xxii. 21.

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*whom custom: fear to whom fear, and honour to whom honour* \*. Is he solicitous to secure the internal peace and tranquillity of the state, against the sudden insurrections and *madness of the people*? Here too religion lends it's aid, and assists him with it's most awful sanctions: not only *warning them that are unruly, and teaching to withdraw from them that walk disorderly*, but declaring that *they who do such things shall not escape the judgment of God* †.

From these, and other innumerable passages in his sermons, it evidently appears, that the main tendency of his public instructions was, to explain and enforce the intimate connection between natural and revealed religion, and between moral and religious duties; and especially, to exalt the christian above every other scheme of religion, as unfolding a wise and benevolent plan of redemption, most consolatory to depraved humanity, effected by unprecedented means, derived from infinite mercy, executed by consummate wisdom, and directed to the noblest end. And further, what should recommend it to the respect of the moralist, (though only a sub-

\* Rom. xiii. 7. † See sermon ii. p. 32.

ordinate

ordinate part of this institution), as containing rules of practice, not only superior to the deductions of human reason, but in terms that are plain, intelligible, and of universal comprehension \*.

Such was the useful and extensive plan of preaching, which the late bishop of Roches-

\* Unquestionable and admirable as is the sublime and pure morality of the gospel, it is evident, that this was not it's *principal object*, or it would certainly have been more *systematically delivered*; whereas the moral *precepts* (which are rather confirmed by new motives and sanctions than taught anew) are incidentally and *occasionally* interspersed throughout the christian revelation, which had a higher object in view, than a mere system of ethics could pretend to, viz. the reconciliation of a guilty world to an offended God, through the atonement of a crucified Saviour. Nor do I hesitate to pronounce, that whoever examines the gospel *merely* with a view to be instructed in *morality*, (superior even in that respect as it is to every other guide) and rests contented with such an examination, will have but a very inadequate and imperfect view of the spirit, design, and tendency of that divine and benevolent dispensation. Nay, whatever veneration the most conscientious of those who profess to believe the gospel, yet reject it's *distinguishing, peculiar, and characteristic doctrines*, may pretend for it's *moral precepts*, it must be confessed that the title itself, *gospel*, or *good tidings*, imports higher expectations and more consolatory hopes, than any *merely moral system* could possibly afford.

ter early adopted and invariably pursued. The admiration which he commanded, might partly be ascribed to his great power of elocution, which he certainly cultivated very diligently and successfully; but principally to the corresponding sanctity of his example, and the becoming dignity of his character.

We all know, and feel, how great a recommendation to a public speaker is a good delivery. Without a proper enunciation, the finest pieces of eloquence will appear vapid, uninteresting, and languid—so true is it of every speaker,

— “ *Malè si mandata loqueris,  
Aut dormitabo, aut ridebo \**.”

Eloquence, I know, has been represented by some men as an unnecessary and improper auxiliary to that gospel, which was planted among the gentile world, by one who totally disclaims, as it is improperly conceived, “ excellency of speech †.” But if he had really been

\* Hor. De Arte Poet. 105.

† More properly rendered, *pomp of language, magni loquentiam, Tremelius ex Syriacâ versione, i. e. ornato & sublimi*

been so void of all powers of elocution, as some erroneously imagine, he would hardly have been taken for the god of eloquence. The fact is, he was certainly master of great *natural pathos*, if not of *artificial rhetoric*, or, he would have been much less admired by many whose attention he seems to have gained chiefly by the exercise of that talent \*. It is not improbable, I think, that as in this, and another remarkable passage † of a similar tendency,

sublimi dicendi genere; (Menochius & Sclaterus) quod tamen poterat, utpote sapientiae secularis non experts. Græcos enim ut Poetas, ita & oratores & philosophos, legerat (Estius). Vid. Pol. Synop. 5. 347. To which may be added, it is the custom of St. Paul to say many things relating to the conduct of his ministry, not according to reality, but according to appearance, *καλα το φαινεσθαι, non καλα το ειναι*, e. g. when he speaks of the *foolishness of preaching* (or *foolish preaching*) 1 Cor. i. 21. and the *foolishness and weakness of God*, (ibid. 25.) and renounces all pretensions to (or rather, perhaps, declines any application of) *human knowledge*, as well as *human eloquence*, 1 Cor. iii. 2, &c.

\* The learned Dr. Cleaver (bishop of Chester) supposes the eloquent apostle to speak ironically, when he disclaims the “ excellency of speech.” See the bishop’s sermon, preached at St. Mary’s, Oxford, Nov. 8, 1795. p. 12.

† 2 Cor. xi. 6. On which it is elegantly observed by Erasmus, *Ει δε κι μιωντες τη λογοφ*—“ Non est fatentis, sed

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dency, the apostle addresses himself to the Corinthians, he might intend a sarcastic reflection on the vain affectation of subtilty, so common among the Greeks, and so remote from true eloquence, in which there can be no doubt he eminently excelled; at least before the impediment, (whatever it was) which he mentions to the Corinthians, had affected his organs of speech\*. But, however that may

sed concedentis et donantis." "Noluit Paulus rhetoricae  
figmentis uti, erat tamen in eo mascula et germana fa-  
cundia, & in verborum simplicitate & exponens quædam, &  
quasi majestas inter dicendum, ad animos auditorum per-  
cellendos potentissima; qualem nec in Demosthene, Pla-  
tonem, &c. comperisse me fateor, five homines perterre fa-  
cere, five commonefacere, five adhortari, constituit,"  
Beza, & Sclaterus. Vid. Pol. Synop. 5. 638.

\* It is supposed by Dr. Whitby, that the view St. Paul had of celestial glories, so affected his nervous system, as to occasion certain paralytic symptoms, particularly in the organs of speech, so as to occasion a *stammering*. See Whitby on 2 Cor. xiii. 7. and 2 Cor. x. 10. But admitting this to be the nature of that infirmity, which he describes by *a thorn in the flesh*, is an infirmity which prevents the exercise of a natural talent, to be deemed a disparagement of that talent? or a prohibition against the right application of it? For proofs of St. Paul's eloquence and learning, and the liberal use he made of them in his apostleship, see the late *bishop of Rochester's*

may be, eloquence comes recommended on a higher authority than that of St. Paul, even that of our blessed Saviour himself. Of him we read, that when he was preaching in the synagogue of Nazareth, his countrymen, notwithstanding their violent and unreasonable prejudices against him, " all bare him witness, and wondered at the *gracious words* that proceeded out of his mouth. And they said, Is not this Joseph's son?"

Another instance of our Saviour's eloquence, and that not to be paralleled in ancient or modern annals, is recorded by St. John; who

in his second volume of his Lord  
ter's sermons, vol. ii. sermon. xxii. p. 4, 5, 6. and sermon.  
xxv. p. 48. *ibid.* which contain a clear refutation of the  
superstitious, and enthusiastic notion, that the cultivation  
of our *natural talents* is inconsistent with the *supernatural*  
*endowments* which the spirit of God confers on such oc-  
casions, and in such degrees, as are *necessary*; or that  
*human eloquence* is an *improper vehicle of divine truth*.

\* Luke iv. 22. The phrase in the original, *λογοῖς*  
*τοῖς χαροῖς*, literally signifies *words of grace*, which it is  
probable, may refer to the agreeable manner of Christ's  
discourse, as well as to the matter of it; and as they  
could not but take notice of the majesty and grace with  
which he spoke, so it must naturally fill them with asto-  
nishment, considering the meanness of his birth and edu-  
cation. See Doddridge and Elstier in loco.

relates,

relates, that when the officers sent by the imperious mandate of the jealous and envious sanhedrim, came to apprehend him, he charmed them by his graceful and persuasive discourse, and sent them back with this remarkable testimony to the force of his eloquence, —*Never man spake like this man*\*! That men whose office is so apt to render them callous to the feelings of sympathy and humanity, that they should be softened by the charms of eloquence, for which they had no previous taste, that they should be so fascinated as to refuse to execute the rigorous and harsh command of their tyrannical rulers, and plead the force of eloquence in their justification—are such demonstrative proofs of the fact, as to render it unnecessary for them to tell us, *Never man spake like this man*!

Whatever, therefore, may be the erroneous opinions of some men concerning the use of eloquence to a christian preacher, we have here an example of sufficient authority to engage him to habituate himself to the most noble and manly kind of eloquence. Amidst all the beautiful simplicity, which a deep

\* John vii. 46.

convic-

conviction of the gospel tended to produce, our christian orator did not conceive the cultivation of his natural powers of elocution beneath his attention.

It is a rule laid down by the writers on rhetoric, that *whosoever would be a good orator must be a good man.* And certainly, nothing can be of greater importance to *him*, whose business it is, to inform, persuade, and convince, than the good opinion which his auditory entertain of his integrity, disinterestedness, sincerity, candour, benevolence, and other virtuous qualities, which are, perhaps, the best qualifications, and the surest grounds of success. The eloquence of an immoral preacher is no better than *sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.* It is his virtue which must raise and dignify his eloquence, while his eloquence adorns and illustrates his virtue—like genius and learning, eloquence and virtue mutually conspire to each other's assistance \*. When the virtuous and exemplary preacher addresses a christian auditory,

— “ Alterius sic  
Altera poscit opem res, & conjurat amice.”

Hor. de Ante Par. 411.

the sublime spirit of piety, which breathes through all his actions as well as words, will animate his addresses with the persuasive and constraining energy of example, infinitely more powerful than the justest and sublimest precepts unaccompanied with this engaging auxiliary. The flame of devotion which burns in his own bosom, will easily insinuate itself into the bosoms of the hearers. The most sensible among them will be penetrated with the deep concern which he so naturally and forcibly expresses for their highest interests, and will yield to the undissembled ardor of the preacher, whilst by his whole manner, earnest, pathetic, and unaffected, he adds a charm to all he utters, and grace and energy to the plainest truths. *Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh; and a good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth good things.* \* The origin, progress, and maturity of the divine life, he will naturally describe from his own experience. He will draw a just and lively portrait of virtue from the bright original in his own breast. Vice he will describe in it's native deformity, from the baneful effects with which he per-

\* Matt. xii. 34, 35.

ceives

ceives it attended in it's slavish votaries. A consciousness of the goodness of his cause, and the purity of his intentions in promoting it, will support him on all occasions; so that, in humble imitation of his divine Master, he will teach as one having authority, and as the ambassador of heaven delegated with divine instructions to the inhabitants of earth.

You, then, who have seen this christian orator in his pulpit, recollect his deportment there. By the aid of memory, once more contemplate that prelusive benignity of aspect, which, before the momentous truths issued from his lips, spoke the inward feelings of his teeming breast, and, with more emphasis than language can express, told his listening and expectant audience, *Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for you is, that ye may be saved*\*. Behold him standing with a composed yet animated countenance, expressive of self-diffidence, and at the same time of consciousness of the importance of the matter on which he is prepared to treat. In a tone that still vibrates on your ears, sweet, mellow, and rising by just and imperceptible

\* Rom. x. 2.

degrees, till it attain it's distinct articulation and proper key ; hear him imparting the dictates of religion in the language of truth and charity—his attitude, aspect and demeanour, have all their just expression—his voice ever observes a just modulation ; his eyes reflect the image of his very soul—his action is graceful, smooth, and temperate—all appears the unstudied result and effect of his inward emotions, never exceeding the modesty of nature, but always chastised by a predominant sense of decorum. His utterance now slow and solemn, as if awed with the majesty of his subject ; now rapid, as if kindled into a divine enthusiasm,—now suspended in sudden and recollected silence, as if his thoughts were too big for expression, and language were inadequate to the greatness of his perceptions.—In all his pauses, tones, and gestures, he cautiously avoids the appearance of art, and follows throughout his whole discourse, the stream of sentiment and emotion, which the occasion spontaneously suggests—

“ Quid—quid, si ipsum audivissetis ?”

Τε καὶ απὸ γλωσσῶν μελίτος γλυκιῶν ἔειν αὐδην \*.

“ Words, sweet as honey, from his lips distill'd †.”

\* Homeri Ilias i. 252.

+ Pope.

But

But to complete the character of the christian orator, his life must be a counterpart of his preaching. Such was that of the late eminent prelate, who is the subject of this imperfect memorial ; between whose life and doctrine so uniform a resemblance existed, that after so full a description of the one, but little requires to be said of the other. He taught no doctrine which he did not believe, he enjoined no precept which he did not himself obey. In his manners the purity of the christian was adorned with the urbanity of the gentleman. In him appeared all the efficacy of religious principle ; that moderation in the exercise of power ; that humility in prosperity, that fortitude in adversity ; that generous pity for the unfortunate ; that patient meekness towards the insolent ; that lenient mercy towards offenders, and, above all, that constant requital of good for evil, which no other principle could uniformly inspire, support, and improve through so long a life. That fervent, yet rational piety, which glowed in his writings and animated his devotions, was the genuine effusion of a soul inflamed with an inextinguishable thirst after christian perfection. In all his

words and actions he constantly strove to express an earnest solicitude for the cause of true religion; he omitted no opportunities of promoting its interests, and was anxious, in all he said and did, to raise it in the estimation of mankind. Both in public and private, he observed an invariable decency and propriety of deportment and conversation, equally remote from levity and austerity.

His munificence, though void of all ostentation, was so conspicuous, that it was frequently remarked to him, that "few men gave so much, and with so good a grace;" to which he was used to answer, that "few persons could have so great a pleasure in giving, as the more he gave, the more Providence seemed to multiply the means of giving." To the clergy he was particularly kind and liberal, and frequently gave large sums to such as were undeservedly impoverished by sickness, by losses, by numerous families, or by any other calamitous circumstances. Nor was his bounty confined to the relieving of the unfortunate and necessitous; but it extended also to the increasing of the conveniences and comforts of those whose lot was

pro-

providentially cast in a fairer ground. And such is the instability of human possessions, that not a few partook of his liberality, who in their earlier years had enjoyed independence and affluence. Let the opulent hence learn not to be *high-minded, but to fear*—not to trust in *uncertain riches*—nor to give them wings by extravagance, but moderately to use, and generously impart them; and never to cramp their generosity (as in these times is too much the case) by luxury, vanity, and prodigality. His favours, however, were not lavished with indiscriminate profusion. He endeavoured, as far as was possible, to select the virtuous and religious, as the first objects of his benevolence. Of these he kept a regular list. He deemed it essential to true charity, not only to *relieve*, but to *prevent*, misery. With this view he cordially patronized those public institutions of national charity, which are peculiarly adapted to diffuse useful knowledge, to encourage industry, and to promote the real happiness of innumerable, forsaken, destitute, and pitiable objects; and who, but for the wisdom and humanity of the most benevolent of their fellow-creatures,

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must have perished in want, misery, and ignorance.

“Numerous, indeed, are the calls upon us for our assistance to remove, or, at least, relieve, human misery! This, in one shape or other, is perpetually presenting itself to our views, and imploring our compassion—some, becoming destitute and wretched for want of timely care and discipline—others, from the natural consequences of their own folly and perverseness: many, from unavoidable and unforeseen misfortunes; from lingering diseases, and disabling accidents: and not a few, who are reduced to groan under this accumulated weight of wretchedness—a burthen too heavy for human nature to bear, were it not for those sympathetic feelings—those *bowels of compassion*, which the Father of mercies hath implanted in us, and which excited by religious motives, incline the good and virtuous part of mankind to *weep with them that weep*, and to take a friendly part in the various calamities to which our common nature is subject \*.”

\* Sermon xiii. p. 203.

And

And when it is recollect, how many admirable institutions of charity owe their origin, or, at least, their growth and progress, to the influence of the beneficed and dignified clergy of England, surely considerate men will be far from grudging them those emoluments which are so often the fruits of their learning and virtue, and so generally applied to the wisest and best of purposes. And when we recollect how large a portion of the too vast revenues of the Gallican church was appropriated to the most benevolent and charitable uses, we cannot but lament that this enormous property should be alienated from the rightful owners, and employed in the most wicked and visionary plans of republican despotism—not as was artfully pretended, to alleviate the public burdens, but to enable the legalized plunderers of these consecrated riches, to attempt a scheme of universal conquest, by first destroying all religious obligation, and preparing the minds of their deluded countrymen, for acting with remorseless fury against every regular government of Europe, that opposed the barrier of religion to the introduction of the destructive principle of their new-fangled and barbarous philosophy—  
a phi-

a philosophy, that instead of humanizing mankind, renders the citizen more ferocious, and systematically cruel, than the most uncultivated savage. So sacrilegious a confiscation of sacred revenues for the vilest purposes of the most destructive ambition, as bankruptcy united with tyranny exhibits in a nation, once styled *most christian*, never before arrested the attention of mankind. Against a principle of such fatal tendency to personal and social happiness, a writer of equal sagacity and celebrity has solemnly warned the people of England, by reminding them, that "they have constitutional motives, as well as religious, against any project of turning their independent clergy into ecclesiastical pensioners of state \*." And also that "from the united considerations of religion and constitutional policy, from their opinion of a duty to make a sure provision for the consolation of the feeble and the instruction of the ignorant, they have incorporated and identified the estate of the church with the mass of *private property*, of which the state is not the proprietor, either for use or dominion, but the guardian only and the regulator. They have

\* The right hon. Edmund Burke's letter, &c. p. 150.

ordained, that the provision of this establishment might be as stable as the earth on which it stands, and should not fluctuate with the Euripus of funds and actions \*.”

Among other principles which have obtained among the greatest statesmen of this country, from very early times to this moment, with a continued and general approbation, and which runs through the whole system of English polity, is one which this admirable writer and profound politician brings forcibly to the attention of those who profess to venerate the British constitution, yet forget the opinions of those who are the most competent judges of it's genuine component principles, viz. that “ they do not consider their church establishment as convenient, but as essential to their state ; not as a thing heterogeneous and separable ; something added for accommodation ; what they may either keep up, or lay aside, according to their temporary ideas of convenience. They consider it as the foundation of their whole constitution, with which, and with every part of which, it holds an indissoluble union. Church

\* Ibid. p. 150.

and

and state are inseparable in their minds, and scarcely is the one ever mentioned without mentioning the other \*.”

Such are the sentiments of an enlightened statesman on a subject of the greatest importance, and such as perfectly agree with those of the late bishop of Rochester on the same interesting subject. Indeed the intimate and inseparable connection and alliance between church and state, so far from being a fictitious refinement of policy, admits of an indirect but striking proof from the conduct of certain factious innovators and reformers, who, indefatigable in their attempts to subvert the constitution, have laid the train for the explosion of it, in the ecclesiastical establishment. It is from that masked battery that an arch-heretic has long contemplated with malignant triumph, the demolition of the whole constitution. It was, therefore, in the bishop's opinion, the duty of a true churchman and a true patriot, (which are inseparable) to oppose all attempts at innovation, both in the civil and ecclesiastical constitution, under whatever specious pretext, as the result,

\* Letter, p. 148.

either

either of mistaken piety, of enterprizing temerity, or of treacherous and designing policy. It was the warmest wish of his heart, to see our excellent and happy form of government, both in church and state, preserved free from the contagious influence of superstitious tyranny on the one hand, and licentious anarchy on the other.

Thus, in the year 1745, for ever memorable in the annals of English history, for the dangerous state to which the rebellious abettors of a popish pretender had reduced our civil and religious liberties, being then rector of Blechingley, he preached, and, at the request of the hearers, printed, a very seasonable discourse, entitled, “The principles and practice of a *Popish Government*, destructive of *civil and religious liberty*.” The object of this discourse (which rapidly attained a second edition) was, to add vigour and activity to those loyal associations which, at that perilous crisis, were formed, with a view to unite the good subjects of England in a determined resistance of that slavery and tyranny which threatened them from the open attack of the implacable enemies of our country, in conjunction

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junction with many rebellious disturbers of the public tranquillity. In this sermon (which was much read and admired at that time) appears the following animated periods. “I know,” says he, “the style of the protestant preacher should be as free from acrimony and sharpness, as the spirit of his religion is from persecution; but zeal is always a virtue when exerted in due season, and has for it’s sanction the greatest example that ever lived. Happy had it been for them, whose blood has been already shed in defence of their country, and for them whose blood may be required for disturbing it, if we who are the *ministers of peace*, did not see the sad necessity of exhorting our hearers boldly to oppose themselves to *those that delight in war*. But the impending danger of the times requires it; and that will speak with more persuasion than I can do.—Yes, with so much persuasion, that, I am convinced, I do not see one person in this assembly *able* to wield a sword, but who is also *willing* to draw it with a true *British* courage in defence of the best of kings, and the happiest constitution in the world \*.”

\* Sermon xxxviii. p. 313.

Yet,

Yet, strongly as he was attached to the protestant cause, he approved of the principles, though not of all the powers and privileges, of an act of the legislature, “for relieving his majesty’s Roman catholic subjects from some of the many penalties and disabilities imposed upon them by the act of king William the Third, for the further preventing the growth of popery.” “The principles,” says he, “that gave rise to it in the other house of parliament, I could not but admit; for they were christian and protestant principles—were founded in the rights of conscience which cannot be forced, nay, in liberality, humanity, and charity \*.”—At the same time, and on the same occasion, he professes himself an advocate for toleration, which he properly styles “the distinguishing character of the protestant religion; which, ever since the happy æra of the revolution, has, with equal humanity and policy, dealt out its indulgence to persons of every sect and persuasion, in proportion to their peaceable and orderly submission to government †.”

\* Charge ii. p. 446.

† Ibid. 449.

At this time, when many of the higher orders of the clergy were treated with the most undeserved, unprovoked, unparalleled, irreverence and insult, the bishop in returning from the abbey, was met in the cloisters by a band of tumultuous and misguided enthusiasts, who seized him by his robes, and demanded, "how he meant to vote in the house of lords?" To which, with great presence and firmness, the bishop answered, "For your interests and my own."—"What, then you don't mean to vote for popery?" "No," says he, "thank God, that is no part of our interests, in this protestant country." Upon hearing which, one of the party clapped his lordship on the back, and cleared the passage for him, calling out, "make way for the protestant bishop."—Thus by presence and firmness, he escaped from the tumultuous fury, and indiscriminate violence of a well-meaning, but misguided populace \*.

Six years subsequent to this period, when a desperate, but happily ineffectual, attempt

\* This anecdote I may not perhaps literally detail, but it is as nearly as possible in the terms which I heard it from a clergyman who was then at Westminster-school.

was made by a female maniac \* to assassinate the sovereign, the bishop drew up, and presented to his majesty, the following congratulatory address, on his providential escape from so wild a sally of lunacy—

“ To the King’s Most Excellent Majesty.

“ Most gracious Sovereign,

“ We your Majesty’s most dutiful and loyal subjects, the bishop, dean and chapter, and clergy of the diocese of Rochester, beg leave to approach the throne with a grateful and pious sense of the merciful interposition of Providence, in protecting your sacred person from the hand of violence, which could only be actuated by a disordered mind, incapable of perceiving, what every one else does, the essential connection between your personal safety and the public welfare; but which has eventually proved, both at home and abroad, how entirely your Majesty possesses the hearts and affections of all your people.

“ That your Majesty, and your illustrious descendants, may long continue the objects

\* Margaret Nicholson.

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of their loyalty, and examples to their virtue,  
is the devout and daily prayer of

In year 1792, it was deemed necessary to publish a royal proclamation, as the most gentle and expedient method of preventing the dreadful consequences of certain seditious opinions imported from the jacobin clubs in France, and with incredible diligence disseminated through every corner of this kingdom. This proclamation was, as usual, productive of public addresses from all corporate bodies, and that which the bishop drew up for the dean and chapter of Westminster, was the last public declaration of his political sentiments, and which is copied, as also the preceding, from the original draft in my possession.

“ To the King’s Most Excellent Majesty,

“ The humble address of the dean and chapter  
of the collegiate church of St. Peter, in  
the city of Westminster.

30

"Most

LATE LORD BISHOP OF ROCHESTER. *clxxix*

vedo ylnegilis from hliw bus egsilwolos  
shw bus ollwolos and shw bus ollwolos  
“ Most gracious Sovereign,

We, your Majesty's dutiful and loyal sub-  
jects, the dean and chapter of the collegiate  
church of St. Peter, in the city of Westmin-  
ster, impressed with a most grateful sense of  
your Majesty's ever watchful care and at-  
tention to maintain and preserve inviolate,  
all the religious and civil rights and privi-  
leges happily established in these kingdoms at  
the glorious revolution; have seen with equal  
abhorrence and concern, the malicious and  
daring attempts of certain disloyal and disaf-  
fected persons, to disturb the well-established  
order of government, by printing, and indus-  
triously dispersing throughout the capital, and  
other populous parts of the kingdom, and  
even through some of the public schools and se-  
minaries, divers wicked and seditious writ-  
ings; the manifest purpose whereto is the  
alteration, or subversion of the present happy  
form of government both in church and state.

“ We, therefore, in the public station wherein  
your Majesty has been graciously pleased to  
place us, being actuated by the purest princi-  
ples of religious loyalty, do most gratefully

acknowledge, and will most diligently obey, and inculcate, the very seasonable and wise directions enjoined in your royal proclamation : humbly beseeching Almighty God, by whom *kings reign and princes decree justice*, that, after a long and prosperous reign of your Majesty over a loyal and grateful people, there never may be wanting a prince of your royal house, to continue the blessings of the present constitution to the latest posterity."

To these, might be added various other proofs of the bishop's sincere and uniform zeal for the stability of our admirable constitution both in church and state, as established at the revolution, and of his hearty attachment to the illustrious house of Brunswick ; but that the particular favours conferred on him by his late, and his present majesty, are the most unquestionable proofs that can be adduced.

He did not, however, frequently declare his political creed, but both from his writings and conversation, in which he always spoke the language of his heart, it may easily be collected, that the welfare of his country was

LATE LORD BISHOP OF ROCHESTER. *clickxi*

was ever near his heart, and on every proper occasion, both in public and private life, he was anxious to convince the world, by the exemplification of his own conduct, that the true christian is the most loyal subject, and the true churchman the sincerest patriot. He was not, however, fond of conversing in mixed companies on the subject of politics; his conversation usually taking a more general turn. For conversation, indeed, his mind seemed to have a natural aptitude. And to render him an instructive and pleasing companion, he possessed an ample fund of anecdote, an accurate and extensive knowledge of history, a familiar acquaintance with the classics, a competent skill in modern languages, and no inconsiderable taste for the fine arts. From a nice discernment of the different capacities and dispositions of men, he knew how to render himself agreeable to most companies. But what made his conversation particularly attractive, was a native and ingenuous complaisance, which an elegant writer defines "a constant endeavour to please those whom we converse with, so far as we may do it innocently \*." With this amiable quality was

\* *The Guardian*, N<sup>o</sup> 162.

the life and character of the  
associated a large share of good-nature and vi-  
vacity, which, as far as was consistent with  
the gravity of his profession, inclined him to  
participate in the sprightly fancies of female  
gaiety, by occasionally sacrificing to the Muses,  
of which I subjoin an agreeable specimen :

A Rebus so pat, and so prettily shaded,  
By the delicate hand of I know who made it—  
What a dunce was the doctor he cou'd not decypher 't,  
I'm sure, says Miss J—, he deserves a bad wife for't,  
Hold, hold, cries another, you'll give him his cue;  
And then he will find it as quickly as you.  
Fair and softly, sweet ladies, replies the divine,  
No wonder I puzzled at every line :  
For as I ne'er saw, so I ne'er cou'd devise  
That honest good heart shou'd be dress'd in disguise !  
But now I have scann'd it more closely, I see,  
That all is as easy and plain as A. B. \*  
So my fair ones this moral I draw from your Rebus—  
Things may be disguis'd, but they can't long deceive us,  
Thus when your gay train of admirers shall swear,  
That the goddess of beauty was not half so fair;  
When they tell you with rapture how much they are smit  
With the beams of your eyes and the charms of your wit;  
That they live in your smiles, but must die if you frown,  
With a thousand such speeches to fribbles well known :  
Trust them all as you wou'd do a Rebus whose meaning  
Is scatter'd so wide, it is seldom worth gleaning.

\* The author's first lady.

But

LATE LORD BISHOP OF ROCHESTER. CANTERBURY

But, should there be one of sound sense and true spirit, of  
Ennobled by fortune, more ennobled by merit ;  
Such worth join'd with your worth, and all must agree,  
You'll be happy and blest like H. M. and R. C.

In his domestic œconomy there was an air of generosity without profusion, and hospitality without ostentation. His aim was, to have every thing in his establishment that comported with the dignity of his rank, and the sobriety of his profession. He received his clergy, and a variety of other guests, at his table, with ease and affability. In his dietetic habits he was invariably abstemious ; and I once heard him declare, that he never remembered he much exceeded a single pint of wine, and never to have been intoxicated in his whole life.

Among the other virtues which he eminently possessed, candour was always predominant and conspicuous. In giving his opinion of characters, he was always remarkable for making candid allowances for those pardonable imperfections which are inseparable from humanity. He studiously avoided all polemical discourse, probably for the same reason that Gregory Nazianzen resolved never

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to be present at ecclesiastical synods \* ; or because the heat of disputation is apt to tempt angry disputants to bestow mutual opprobrious appellations ; of which Dr. Hammond gives a humorous instance, viz. “ when a Dutchman’s horse does not go as he would have him, he in great rage calls him an Arminian † .” And much is it to be regretted, that equal candour has not always been observed in the speeches and writings of churchmen, one towards another, or that the asperity of theological controversy should have given the sharpest point to the irony of an elegant but sceptical historian ‡ ! The unfair advantage which this elaborate, but disingenuous antagonist of christianity, has taken of the indecorous virulence of style, and acrimony of temper, observable in the religious disquisitions of those of the sacerdotal order, who profess most zealously and earnestly to

\* *De differentiis vitæ.* *Mibi certum est deliberatumque, nunquam postbac anserum aut gruum, temerè inter se pugnantium, synodis interesse.*—And Procopius observes, *Se nullius synodi felicem vidisse exitum.*

† See Appendix to Mr. Jones’s Life of Dr. Horne, p. 300.

‡ Gibbon.

contend

contend for the orthodox faith, should have disposed some eminent writers among the clergy of the present day, to have shewn more candour, good-breeding and civility, in examining the tenets, or appreciating the learning and talents, as well of those who are passed into that state where no merit is unrewarded, as of those who are still in a state of probation, and feelingly alive to every wound that polemical temerity may inflict on their present or posthumous fame. How surprised and mortified would the late bishop of Rochester have been, to perceive his admired friend, archbishop Secker, represented as incompetent to decide on the merits of the Divine Legation, and “attaining to no great distinction even in the *narrow* walk of literature he most affected \*.” And how must his sensibility

\* See a discourse by way of general preface to the quarto edition of bishop Warburton’s works, p. 82. How much nearer the truth is that classical tribute to recently departed merit, in the bishop’s speech to the convocation —“ Proh ! incredibilem industriam, et omnigenæ literaturæ supellecilem ! —quibus accessit indoles adeo vegeta, mentisque vires, usque ad extremum exactæ vitæ curriculum, adeo infractæ, adeo ad universa provinciæ suæ munera obeunda aptæ et accommodatæ, ut difficile dictu sit, an viri virtutes

CHAP. VI. LIFE AND CHARACTER OF THE A. I.

sibility have been wounded, to behold his venerable predecessor, and a worthy and elevated friend ranked, by an eminent dignitary of the church, among the secret and disingenuous disciples of Socinus\*! There is certainly so much partiality in estimating and comparing the literary merits of the archbishop in the former of those publications, to which I have alluded, and so much temerity of judgment, and acrimony of spirit in scrutinizing the opinions and tenets of the two eminent divines in the latter, as must have been heartily disapproved by the late bishop of Rochester, who, though as bold in the defence of truth as either of these writers, never found it expedient to utter an uncandid expression in animadverting on those of his own profession —

Neque hic lupis mos nec fuit leonibus

Nunquam nisi in dispar feris.

Furore cæcus, an rapit vis acrior:

An culpa? Responsum date,

virtutes magis ornarint præfulem, an præfuleis virum?

Vid. Orat. quam, &c. p. 459.

\* See a letter to the Rev. William Bell, D. D. &c. by the Dean of Christ-Church, p. 9. &c. passim.

Tacent, & ora pallor albus inficit,  
Mentefque perculse stupent.  
Sic est synesis quae ollam quodam  
miduimus reverentiamq; sed te nobis in

He never was heard to speak worse of any man than a regard to truth required; nor to give an ill opinion of any man without sufficient reason, and when he did, not to exceed the bounds of moderation. He was rather disposed to speak of things than persons. Of himself and his own virtues and attainments, he never spoke but with reluctance and diffidence. Flattery was as offensive to his modesty, as calumny to his sensibility.

To his domestics he was kind and generous; and those servants who had attended him in illness, or had been long in his family, experienced peculiar kindness. Indeed, so attached were his servants in general to their master, that some of them had lived in his service a series of years, and but one among them so short a time as a single year. To his upper servant (as indeed to many others) he had given a profitable place for life; and by his will a legacy of 200l., beside

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all his linen, robes, and clothes, &c \*. The bishop was also very attentive to the religious instruction of his servants, never omitting himself to exercise them in prayer twice a day; and with great propriety he recommends the regular practice of family devotion † to his clergy, as the best method of preserving a sense of piety in their own households. From the general neglect of domestic piety, and of public worship, in fashionable life, the incessant dissipation of which leaves neither time nor inclination for any religious duties, either social or private, may fairly be derived

\* Of the folly of leaving such legacies to servants, as are injurious to the relations of the testator, Sir J. Hawkins has given us a memorable instance in his life of Dr. Johnson, c. v. p. 599. Postscript.

The sum of the account is, that Dr. Johnson made his negro-servant a bequest of 1,500l., and to five near relations 235l. A few days after the doctor's decease, Francis (the negro servant) was petitioned by a relation of his master, for some money to enable him to buy bedding and clothes, of which he was totally destitute—His answer to this petition was—I cannot afford it!

† See charge II. p. 4, 41. On this subject Mr. Gisborne has lately given some excellent advice to the laity. See Gisborne's Duties, &c. Vol. II. p. 474. See also Paley's Moral Philosophy, on the same subject.

much of that profaneness and debauchery, which infects all ranks from the prince to the peasant, with it's contagious and pestilential influence.

“ *Hoc fonte derivata clades  
In patriam populumque fluxit \**.”

As nothing, however, could be more sincere than his piety, so nothing was more rational. It was not occasionally assumed, but gave a colouring to all his actions both public and private; and, in all situations and circumstances, was the supreme guide and director of his whole conduct. In no instance was it's influence more apparent, than in controlling his temper, which was naturally quick and impatient; but by applying those excellent rules and precautions, which he prescribed to others, to the regulation of his own temper, he so far subdued it's natural warmth, as never to suffer it to gain such an ascendency over his reason, as ever to betray him into any actions that cost him an hour's remorse. Sometimes, indeed, he might kindle on a sudden into ex-

\* Hor. Carm. 3. Ode 6. 20.

THE LIFE AND CHARACTER OF THE BISHOP

expressions of anger, but as suddenly recollecting himself, and checking the rising passion, he regained almost instantaneously his usual mildness and composure. But if ever he was provoked to use harsher language than the occasion warranted, he was always anxious and eager to embrace the first opportunity of making reparation; and such was the natural benevolence of his heart, that he never wounded the feelings of those whom it might be his duty to reprove, without endeavouring, on the very first symptoms of compunction, to soothe and encourage them.

In short, whoever had an opportunity of estimating the character of the late bishop of Rochester, whether as a gentleman, a scholar, or a divine, will perceive so much to praise and admire, that, making due allowances for human imperfection, he will feel as little inclined as the writer of this unadorned narrative, to detail any of those pardonable failings, from which no being merely human can boast exemption. For indeed fidelity and truth, honour and integrity, candour and humanity, learning and modesty, sincerity and urbanity, were the prominent features in

his

his character, which added to his other christian virtues and intellectual endowments, rendered him an object of peculiar affection and esteem among all his friends and associates. So void of reserve was he in social intercourse, that those who were within the sphere of his acquaintance could not fail of knowing him; or those who knew him, of loving and esteeming him: and those, it is presumed, to whom his person and character were not known, will be inclined, if not on account of what is herein so imperfectly detailed, yet at least for his work's sake, to venerate his memory. And I feel conscious, that most of his surviving clergy will be ready, from their personal knowledge of their late diocesan, to pronounce his eulogium in the language of the apostle, and declare, that ~~he was a bishop, blameless as the~~ ~~reward of God, not self-willed, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre, but a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate, holding fast the faithful word as he had been taught, and that he was able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort, and to convince the gainsayers.~~ ~~multum diu in nobis beatificans et yam~~ ~~enimq; elanobisq; a rigore ad illam si cœpisset~~

Thus much of the life and character of the late bishop of Rochester, it has been thought proper to delineate. To some, perhaps, this sketch may seem to be drawn with the warm colouring of affection and admiration, rather than by the sober pencil of truth. But if this amiable prelate did so shape his conduct, that these imperfect traits of his character and life must have the air of panegyric; this must be imputed not to the copy but to the original.

I shall conclude with the appropriate sentiment, and in the expressive language, of an eminent writer, and distinguished ornament of the prelacy.

“ I have thus paid that last duty to the memory of this excellent man, which I could not but esteem a debt to such a benefactor to the cause of religion and learning united. And, as these works of his must last as long as any language remains to convey them to future times; perhaps I may flatter myself, that this faint and imperfect account of him may be transmitted down with them. And I hope, it will be thought a pardonable piece of

of ambition, and self-interestedness; if, being fearful lest every thing else should prove too weak to keep the remembrance of myself in being, I lay hold on *his* fame, to prop and support *my own*. I am sure, as I have little reason to expect, that any thing of mine, without such an assistance, can live: I shall think myself greatly recompensed for the want of any other memorial, if *my* name may go down to posterity thus closely joined to *his*; and I myself be thought of, and spoke of, in ages to come, under the character of the FRIEND OF DR." THOMAS.

G. A. THOMAS.

June 6, 1796.  
Greenwich, Kent.



## POSTSCRIPT.

SINCE these Sermons were printed off, a few repetitions of sentiment and language have been discovered, but being very rare, it is hoped, the oversight will easily be pardoned. Indeed, had the Editor made the discovery in time to retrench them, such retrenchments might have left chasms, as objectionable, perhaps, as the redundances themselves. Those which have been observed by the Editor are as follows, viz. Vol. I. p. 7, and 189. Sermon 2, is similar in it's conclusion to Sermon 7. The 13th and 34th, and also the 17th and 19th Sermons, conclude with similar sentiments.

The Reader is requested to make the following corrections.—Vol. II. p. 57, instead of—says Poole, &c. read, Poli Synop. in loco. pro *crededirim*, lege *crediderim*. P. 58, instead of Grotius and Poole, read *and* Grotius *in* Poole.—Should any mistakes, at all affecting orthodoxy, appear to have been committed by the Editor, he pleads his apology (if necessary) in the language of Augustin—“ *Errare possum, hæreticus esse nolo.*”

The typographical errors which have been detected by the Editor (some few instances of erroneous punctuation or accentuation excepted) are the following.—E. G.

Vol. I. p. 83. note, for reinstated, read reinstuted. P. 299, note, for have been, read be. Vol. II. p. 5. note, pro *Tæporæus*, lege *Tæporæus*. P. 7. pro *dentum*, lege *dentem*. P. 9, for *leauned*, read *learned*. P. 128, note, for *Eytkeæan*, read *Erythræan*. P. 149, for *too*, read *to*. P. 163, pro *en posita*, lege *expofia*. P. 167, in the ninth line after *by*, insert *the*. P. 170, for *follow-creatures* read *fellow-creatures*. P. 171, line fourth, for *their* read *bis*. P. 195, note, pro *ell*, lege *el t.* P. 200, note, for *Agustin*, read *Augustin*. P. 262, line seventh, dele *to*. P. 380, for *tbr* read *the*. In Charge second, p. 451, line sixth, after *but*, insert *as*. Orat. Synod. pro *quantulun* *cunque*, lege *quantuluncunque*.

In life, &c. p. 99, instead of, Vid. Orat. Synod, read, Life, &c. of bishop Newton, p. 112. After the word *evening* (line nineteenth) add the word *following*.

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1780

John 14:12. We are the friends of the Father because  
God is our friend and we are the friends of  
those who are the friends of the Father. *John 15:14*  
The love of God continuing

## SERMON I.

### ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION.

PREACHED AT BROMLEY, IN KENT, FOR  
THE BENEFIT OF THE SUNDAY SCHOOLS  
THERE, SEPT. 28, 1788.

PROV. xix. 8.

*He that getteth wisdom, loveth his own soul ;  
and he that keepeth understanding, shall find  
good.*

THIS assertion of the Royal Teacher, like all his other useful maxims, is founded in truth, and confirmed by experience—By wisdom he means a lively practical sense of religion and virtue; acquired by instruction, improved by application, and manifested by

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a constant and uniform practice of the duties which mankind owe to God, their neighbours, and themselves.—To be ignorant of these duties, is to be uncivilized and barbarous.

We might suppose, therefore, that a course of education, adapted to the different conditions of youth, would have no objections made to it by sensible and candid minds—and yet, among the fanciful writers of the present age, there are those who maintain, “that children should be left to the operation of their own natural powers; and that to infuse any principles of religious or moral conduct, can only serve to fill them with prejudices, and to check the natural liberty and progress of the human mind.”

But the absurdity of such an opinion will appear from briefly considering the different characters and dispositions of the human race, as formed under these opposite plans.—Thus, in taking a view of that part of the world where early instruction and discipline are in use, we see whole nations civilized and polished—good order and government maintained

ed—religion established—social virtues practised—science flourishing—arts encouraged—commerce extended, and every elegant refinement in taste and manners introduced and adopted.—But if we turn to the descriptions given us of those remote regions which the enterprizing spirit of the present age hath discovered, and where human nature is left to itself, they exhibit the very reverse of these characters. Here a people of a barbarous and savage cast, treacherous, vindictive, cruel.—There of a disposition more hospitable perhaps; but dishonest, sensual, slothful.—No sense of decency or modesty in the one: scarce any feelings of humanity in the other—and all so grossly ignorant, so greatly fallen below what we are taught to conceive of the powers of human nature, that we are almost ready to believe that, in those distant regions, the people, like their animals, fruits and grain, are of a different species; and not endowed with the same rational faculties and capacities as ourselves.

And yet, before we presume upon such a distinction, it will become us to reflect, that our own country, humanized and polished as

it now is, was, in former times, as idolatrous, uncivilized, and unenlightened as those people who sit still in darkness ! And to what are we to ascribe our deliverance from it, and our superior advantages of knowledge and the comforts of life, but to a better cultivation of the powers and faculties of the human mind? to the light that has been thrown upon it by the glorious gospel of Christ—to that unerring rule of life and manners which it prescribes—to that equitable and benevolent spirit of it, which animates the whole body of our laws—sustains the admired fabric of our constitution—strengthens our obligation to every moral and social duty; and which, the more we are taught to believe and obey it, the more plentifully will it yield the good fruit of private virtue and public happiness.

It should seem then, that the opposite characters of people in different countries, and of individuals in the same country, are not so much owing to any intellectual defect in the one, or capacity in the other; as to the early discipline in which they happened to be trained, the examples by which they are formed.

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formed, and the habits they are suffered to acquire : but, above all, to a timely instruction in the doctrines and duties of that everlasting gospel which is graciously intended to be, and in God's good time will be, communicated to every tribe and nation upon earth. In the mean while, it is experimentally true, that those communities have always been best regulated and most prosperous, wherein a just sense of religion and virtue hath been early and diligently inculcated. For the sanctions of Christianity apply immediately to the conscience ; to the hopes and fears of mankind : and, as they strongly enforce the obligations to social duty, and have a natural tendency to advance the public welfare ; so, to see them duly impressed on the minds of youth, should be considered as an object highly worthy of the public attention.

If then human nature, as hath been already observed, be in all times and countries nearly the same ; hath the same appetites, passions and affections ; the same powers and capacities of mind and body, and takes its prevailing bent and inclination to vice or virtue, to wisdom or folly, more from right or

wrong methods of cultivation, than from any essential difference in constitution ; it will naturally follow, That except due care be taken to cultivate and plant in the minds of youth the good seed of religion and virtue, they will naturally run into disorder, licentiousness, and vicious habits.

Now, in order to support and confirm this position, I shall not enter far into the question, whether vice, in any, or all its various shapes, takes its rise from the inbred corruption of our lives ; or, whether it is the effect of early indulgence, increased by neglect, and promoted by example. The truth may possibly lie between the two opinions,—though both shew the expediency of impressing the youthful mind with right principles ; as well to prevent the *habitual*, as to correct the *natural* disposition.

Certain it is, that the main springs and sources of human conduct arise from the reason, and the passions of mankind.—These indeed are *different*, but were not intended to be *contradictory* principles. If they become so, as they too often do, the blame must be imputed

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imputed either to ourselves, or those who had the care of us: for our reason hath as natural a tendency to wisdom and truth, which are essentially necessary to promote our final happiness, as our appetites have to food or clothing, on which depends the comfort of our present life.

Now in order to direct these active principles to their proper objects, we should carefully regulate their respective tendencies; so that the appetites and passions may be restrained and held in by discipline and instruction, till reason, aided by a sense of religion, may acquire sufficient strength to check their impetuosity. But, in the early part of life, when right impressions are most easily made, is the same care taken to cultivate and improve the *minds* of youth, as to form and adorn their persons? Are the precepts of religion and morality as strictly inculcated, as the subordinate rules of address and good-breeding? And are proper endeavours used that they improve in wisdom, as they increase in stature?—Would to God it were a fashionable, it would surely be a commendable testimony, to say of the youth of these times,

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what the great Apostle did of Timothy—  
“ *That from a child he had known the holy Scriptures, which were able to make him wise unto salvation!*”

But, instead of acquiring a right sense of duty to God and man from such knowledge, it is to be feared that too many, both of the higher and lower ranks, are permitted to learn, what their growing passions will never let them forget—a taste for the pleasures, the follies, and vices of the world. Diversions ill chosen, and idleness too much indulged, take the mind off from its proper objects; and hence all pursuit of knowledge, all application to business, and the serious concerns of religion become irksome and distasteful. Corrupted also by irreverent and indiscreet example, the simplicity of youth is apt to think there is something brave and manly in imitating the profligate discourse and behaviour of their superiors: until growing impatient of the little restraint that is over them, they soon break loose from such feeble ties, and rush into the broad paths of vice, and captivating pleasures, with as little sense of danger as *the bird that hasteneth to the snare* \*.

\* *Prov. vii. 23.*

Were

Were it necessary to enlarge upon this point, I might add, that the youthful mind (thus neglected and suffered to take a wrong turn, when sound principles of religion, sobriety, and honesty, should be planted and grow to maturity,) soon runs into rank wilderness; and checks the growth of virtue in every thing near it. All those wholesome restraints enjoined in the precepts, and enforced by the sanctions of religion, are either neglected and forgotten, or rejected as inconsistent with natural liberty.—Hence every opportunity of sensual indulgence is diligently provided, and eagerly embraced.—Impure desires solicit, and are gratified.—*The wine sheweth itself in the cup* \*, and is repeated to excess: and, that none may go without his share of voluptuousness, if some branches of pleasurable gratification are above the common reach, others are brought down to the level of their ability.—But mark the end of such men, and you will find intemperance and idleness, dishonesty and poverty are relative evils, which mutually generate and produce each other: until the profligate,

growing impatient under the needy circumstances to which his follies have reduced him, but averse to the honest means of industry, to better his condition, either puts an end to a wretched life by doing violence to himself, or falls an unregarded victim to justice, for committing acts of violence upon others.

Such has often been acknowledged the fatal consequence of neglecting to give the mind an early bent and inclination to virtue—a neglect which not only opens an inlet to private vices, to the ruin of individuals, but is equally productive of public disorder to the detriment of the community. For, where the Christian sanctions take no hold of men, what security have we that the social duties, which Christianity strongly enforceth, will be more binding? Even the sacred tie of an oath, on which depend our rights and properties, may not always have sufficient hold on those by whom that awful name, which makes it sacred, is blasphemed and disregarded: and it is a sad thing to consider, that, as the necessary occasions of administering oaths have increased, (which implies likewise the increase

increase of fraud and wickedness;) the security, intended to result from them, seems to be rather weakened and diminished.—But we are told by the prophet, and should do well to observe it, that, in his days, *because of swearing, the land mourned\**; and that the curse of the Lord was upon them who swore falsely in his name †.

However, we are not to conclude from a few glaring instances of depravity, that vice and impiety form the prevailing character of the times. We should rather hope, (for Christian charity hopeth all things) that a practical sense of religion, and a strict regard to decency and virtue, if encouraged by the higher ranks, as it confessedly is by the highest of all, will gradually descend and be exemplified in the lower ranks of people. For the reformation of bad men may be greatly promoted by the amiable manners and gentle admonitions of the good—by shewing that even the advantages of health, reputation and fortune, are all on the side of religious virtue—that true piety is not of a mo-

\* Jer. xxiii. 10.

† Zech. v. 4.

rose unsociable nature ; and that no pleasures disgust the *Christian*, which should not also disgrace the *man*.

All, therefore, who wish well to the community, and to their own safety, as inseparably connected with it, should exert all the power, influence and authority, resulting from their rank and station, to impress upon the minds of men a lively sense of *religious* motives, in order to promote the *legal* methods of reformation.

This we know has lately been the subject of a royal admonition from the *Father* and *Protector* of his people. And may not every *father*, every *master*, every *friend* contribute, in some measure, to this good purpose, if they will but lay hold of the various opportunities that offer, to check the first instances of irregularity in their children, servants, and companions ; and, according to the apostle's direction, \* *warn them that are disorderly, and in meekness instruct those that are contumacious ; if peradventure, God will give them re-*

\* 1 Thess. v, 14.

*penitance*

*penance to the acknowledgment of the truth \*?*

—Every good man thus forming the manners of those about him on virtuous principles; and confirming them in goodness by a regular attendance on the sacred offices of the church, (from the neglect of which many of the disorders we complain of may proceed) will not only contribute something to the advancement of public decency and virtue, but will have the pleasing satisfaction of having endeavoured at least, *to turn many to righteousness.*

I would willingly hope, and have great satisfaction in observing, that much of the good order and decency to be found in this neighbourhood, results from the prudent admonitions and examples of the respectable families residing in it: and we may justly conceive hopes of increasing goodness in the rising generation, from the many useful seminaries of discipline and instruction to be found in this place—all tending to fit and prepare the minds of youth for their several future occupations. In the mean time, it affords a very sensible pleasure to every good mind, to see with what order and decency the several trains of chil-

dren are conducted by their respective teachers to their Sunday's devotion in this church \* ! And happy is it for them, to have parents or friends, both able and willing thus to provide for them !

But it is not so with the children of poor, and perhaps debilitated parents amongst us, whose daily labour is not sufficient to procure their daily bread : much less to provide that spiritual food of knowledge, which should enable them, according to their baptismal vow, to *fight manfully against sin, the world, and the devil ; and to continue Christ's faithful soldiers and servants to their lives' end* † ! Alas, they are not sufficient of themselves for these duties ; but their sufficiency cometh of God, and you, my brethren, here assembled to serve him ! This I say with the greater confidence, as knowing the commendable support that has, for many years, been administered to the charity school of this parish : and much benefit has resulted from it.

Indeed, the most effectual means that human wisdom could have devised to stop the

\* Bromley, Kent.

† See Office for Baptism.

progress of moral depravity, in the lower ranks of people, was the institution of such charitable nurseries as this, for the support of which I am here an advocate.—For had it not been for those numerous parochial seminaries, that owe their rise and establishment to the benevolent policy of the present age, God alone knows to what a dangerous height impiety and profligacy might have risen amongst us!

With a view, therefore, to prevent these evils in some degree, several of the opulent and benevolent inhabitants of this place, engaged in a voluntary subscription, to clothe and get instructed in reading, writing, and a little knowledge in accounts, thirty children of both sexes, selected from the most indigent families, and after being so taught, to place them out in service; in hopes that others, seeing their good works, might be induced to enlarge their ability, and strengthen their hands in this labour of love.

Being thus put under a daily, and, what would be still better, a constant discipline; the more effectually to secure them from the

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contagion of impious discourse and profligate manners they may happen to catch abroad, —bad habits will be corrected—good ones introduced, and a sense of obedience and modesty; diligence and industry—qualities well suited to their humble station, soon grow familiar and easy to them. So that when fit to be removed from this nursery, if the same care be taken to cultivate and improve the seeds of virtue that was employed in raising them, no doubt but a profitable increase would redound to the benefit and satisfaction of their employers.

But little will this good design be promoted; little will the spiritual and bodily wants of these poor children now before you, be advanced, without some addition to the bounty we have hitherto extended to them. If then your discernment perceives, (and I am persuaded it does perceive) the benefits that result from this charitable institution, let me presume to hope, that our *common humanity* will incline us to feel their wants, and our gratitude for the *divine* to ourselves, will be a sufficient motive to relieve them.

And

And surely, when we see ourselves possessed of the various blessings of the season, which a gracious Providence has poured in upon us; when we taste the precious fruits brought forth by the sun, and see our vallies that stood *so thick with corn* that, in the language of the holy psalmist, they seemed *to laugh and sing* \*, we cannot be insensible to the spiritual or bodily wants of our indigent fellow-creatures. God, our common creator and father, who *maketh poor and maketh rich, dividing to every man according to his good pleasure*, hath left the wants of one part of the world to be supplied out of the abundance of the other: so that of those *to whom much is given, much will be required* †.—And what are we *now* required to give?—No more, perhaps, than is often expended on some curious trifle, or a fashionable entertainment.—But for what purpose are we *here* called upon to give?—Is it not to infuse knowledge into the simple?—to cover the naked with a garment?—and to render those *useful*, who might otherwise become *burthful* to us?—Recollect then, I beseech you, whether you have not

\* Psalm lxv. 13.

† Luke xii. 48.

always felt a more solid satisfaction from every such act of charity, than from any gratification that your fancy could suggest, or your riches procure?—For what are all the transient indulgences of sense and appetite, compared with the more durable and rational pleasure of *doing good*? It is this, and this only, that heightens the relish, and sanctifies the innocent enjoyments of life; and it is *this*, which, we humbly hope, through the merits of a Redeemer, will blunt the sting of those that are criminal. Let us, then, *give alms of our goods, and not turn away our faces from these poor children, and then the face of the Lord will not be turned away from us*\*!

\* Tobit iv. 7.

S E R.

## S E R M O N . II.

### THE HAPPY EFFECTS OF RELIGIOUS UNION AND SOCIAL CONCORD.

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#### PSALM CXXXIII. I.

*Behold, how good and how pleasant it is, for  
brethren to dwell together in unity.*

THE language of a good heart, when warm with a sense of its own and the public happiness, will always be that of nature; flowing from the pure source of benevolence, and conveying a clear idea of those blessings in which our social nature delights.

Thus the sentiment which is expressed with so much beautiful simplicity in the words of the text, strikes the mind at once as a plain self-evident truth, that requires no proof to establish, no reasoning to enforce it. Every

one must acknowledge *how good and pleasing it is to dwell together in unity*: Every honest mind, at least, will adopt the principle, diffuse it's influence, and rejoice in it's effects.

That the psalm before us hath a reference to some particular event in the royal author's life is highly probable. The very turn and matter of it imply such a reference. And indeed we may justly presume, that such a sudden emotion of heart, such a lively description of his own feelings, and such an affectionate appeal to the public sensibility, must have been suggested by an event of the most interesting nature: It is true, we have no light from the psalm itself that can help us to discover the particulars which it alludes to; but we have the sacred history of the actions of the royal psalmist, which is the best comment upon his compositions: the one containing a plain and simple narrative of facts, and the other his own most beautiful and candid reflections upon them. Hence the various occurrences he met with, his dangers and deliverances; his victories and his losses; the malice of his enemies, the fidelity of his friends, and even the failings and

and infirmities of his temper, were, by the powers of his divine genius, converted either into the most animated strains of praise and thanksgiving; or into penitential hymns of supplication and prayer: Some expressive of the deepest contrition for his own sins—others composed of intercessions for the sins of his people; and all tending to promote the glory of God, the advancement of piety, and the public happiness. With a view to these great ends, he had, by the special appointment of Providence, as well as by the voluntary election of the twelve tribes, been exalted from a low state to the supreme command of God's chosen people: and never was there a prince more solicitous to attain those ends; or who could on surer grounds appeal to the searcher of all hearts for the purity of his intentions. But the purest intentions, and the most upright administration of government, are not always an effectual security against the dark intrigues and insinuating arts of factious, ambitious men. Even David, with all his virtues, must have fallen a prey to them, had not the Lord in whom he trusted, preserved him from the gathering together of the forward, and from the insurrection of evil doers.\*.

\* Psalm lxiv. 2.

This, indeed, was an incident the most affecting, of all others that befel him; and seems to have put the fortitude of the hero, and the tenderness of the parent, to the severest trial. The book of Psalms contains many affecting allusions to it: the second book of Samuel relates it at large, and though some part has been read for the service of the day, it may nevertheless be of use to *re-consider* the principal circumstances of the story.—They will shew us what a peculiar force and energy they give to the royal psalmist's invocation.—They may excite in our minds a pleasing train of reflexions on the religious and civil blessings which the providential event of this day \* restored to us; and, by leading us to acknowledge how *good and joyful it is, for brethren to dwell together in unity*, may dispose us to exert, as far as we are concerned, our respective endeavours to promote it.

Let us proceed, then, from that period in the sacred annals when David, after a wonderful series of success, saw the peace and

\* The Restoration of King Charles II. May 29, 1660.  
prof-

prosperity of his kingdom all at once interrupted by a most unnatural rebellion, and a total defection of the tribes of Israel.—His palaces seized, his throne usurped, the holy rites of religion prophaned ; and himself, with a few faithful attendants, hardly escaping the snares of his enemies, by a precipitate flight, over the river Jordan.

In this distressful situation, which in the mean time was greatly alleviated by the generosity, the fidelity, and unshaken loyalty of such of his people as had time to join him, his chief concern was for the safety of a beloved but infatuated son, and for a country, not less dear to him, upon the very brink of being plunged into all the miseries of civil war. These, however, we rehappily stopped in their progress, by a decisive victory over all his enemies in one single battle. And yet the public tranquillity was no sooner restored, than in danger of being interrupted : for the victory, which *should* have restored it, was turned into mourning ; and the tears of the conqueror were the only sacrifice offered upon its altar. By one of those sudden changes that are often produced in popular tumults,

the very party which had so firmly adhered to their sovereign, became impatient to abandon him ; whilst they who had been too easily seduced from their obedience, were no less impatient to return to it. The men of Judah, in short, offended that the lustre of their triumph should be tarnished by the unseasonable affliction of the king for the death of Absalom, *gat them away by stealth into the city, as people ashamed steal away when they flee from the battle* \*.

To prevent the consequences of a revolt so little expected, and taken up on such slight grounds, the mildest methods of application were held most adviseable ; and therefore David, who well knew the temper and disposition of his people, and that their loyalty and affection were too deeply rooted to be shaken by every little blast of discontent, assumed a cheerful countenance, receiving all who came into his presence with grace and favor. He dispatched also a conciliating message to the elders of Judah (who had again possessed themselves of Jerusalem) ordering it to be

\* 2 Sam. xix. 3.

delivered

delivered by Zadoc and Abiathar, whose sacred character well qualified them for an embassy of peace.—*Why, said he, are ye the last to bring the king back to his house? seeing the speech of all Israel is come to the king, even to his house? Ye are my brethren! ye are my bone and my flesh! wherefore then are ye the last to bring the king back* \*?

The persuasive tenderness of this address was irresistible. It brought to mind all the endearing instances of his kindness, and reproached them with the baseness of their own ingratitude—it made them reflect on his eminent qualities and endowments; on his love of country, his regard to justice, his zeal for true religion; the glory of his conquests and the mildness of his government.—In short, it did every thing that a returning sense of duty and allegiance could do:—*It bowed the hearts of all the men of Judah, as the heart of one man: so that they sent this word unto the king, Return, thou and all thy servants* †.

Think, now, with what satisfaction the good king David must have received this

\* 2 Sam. xix. 11, 12.

† Ibid. xix. 14.

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unanimous invitation from his favourite city of Jerufalem ! a satisfaction which in him did not spring from an impatience to resume the reins of government that had been impiously wrested from him—not from a fond desire to indulge in the pride of empire, or the wanton exercise of power in taking vengeance of his enemies ; but from the god-like disposition to pardon rather than punish: to temper the severity of justice, and to quiet the fears of the obnoxious, by extending his grace and mercy even to the repenting Shimei, who had cursed the Lord's anointed. With these marks of his clemency, and no contention remaining, but who should be most forward in every dutiful expression of zeal and attachment to their royal master, we may suppose him to make his entrance into the metropolis of his kingdom amidst the joyful acclamations of all ranks of people, and to conduct them in solemn procession to the tabernacle of the Most High ; there to pay their united tribute of praise and thanksgiving to that Almighty Being, who alone maketh men to be of one mind in an house. —At this happy conjuncture, how natural was it for a good heart, like that of David,

to

to give vent to its fulness of joy, in the rapturous expression of the text ! *Bebold, how good and how pleasant it is, for brethren to dwell together in unity !* See the happy effects of religious union and social concord ! What pleasure and delight they spread over every countenance ! what harmony and good order through the whole state ! a blessing in itself, and the leading cause of every blessing, unity, like the precious ointment that was poured on Aaron's head, and went down to the skirts of his garments, conveyeth its beneficial influence to the very lowest members of the community. May you ever cultivate and enjoy the fruits of this happy temper ! that it may be as the dew of Hermon, and as the dews that descend on the Hill of Sion ; producing a perpetual verdure, and enriching it with every thing that can contribute to the pleasure and comfort of social life.

In collecting the preceding particulars from Sacred Story, no comparison is meant between the circumstances of the psalmist's case, and those of the prince, for whose auspicious restoration to the long usurped throne of these kingdoms, we have here been offering our praises

praises to him, *whose kingdom ruleth over all.* Perhaps the single point that bears a true resemblance, is the peaceable and orderly manner in which both these great events were brought about.—Both were effected by the general concurrence and *unanimity* of their people — Both were justly ascribed to the gracious influence of God on the will and *affections* of their people ;—and both should be considered as standing lessons of instruction to *any* people, *That national unanimity, proceeding upon right principles of religion and government, must invariably lead to national happiness.*

Little needs be said to explain the nature, or display the effects of this divine principle ; for divine it is in every view, as flowing from that order and harmony in the will of God, which sustains the whole system of nature, which constitutes the benevolent spirit of religion, and forms the supreme felicity of heaven itself : for there all is happiness, because all is union, and concord, and peace.

But unanimity, as it regards the institutions of human governments, which partake  
more

more or less of human imperfection, may fall greatly below this idea, and yet be productive of a competent degree of national happiness.—The truth is, absolute perfection is no more to be expected in any government on earth than in the individuals who are subject to it: but there may be a comparative perfection in both: and therefore to bring the matter home to others, the main points in question will be, whether the leading principles in our own constitution of government be not more perfect than our practice?—Whether they are not framed in the wisest manner to make us happy? for indeed they partake of the wisdom of God as well as of man.—Whether they do not give as full and ample security for our civil and religious rights as a reasonable mind can wish for; and such as other nations wish for in vain? And lastly, the better to effectuate this security, whether power is not as much restrained from being oppressive, as liberty is from being licentious?—There can be but one answer to these questions, if truth pronounce it.

Is it possible then to conceive a more benevolent system of government, one more fitted

fitted to produce national union and happiness, than this which intends and provides for the immediate and final good of all its members ! dispensing to every individual as much liberty as is consistent with the peace, good order, and safety of the community ;— happy if they assumed no more ! allowing every denomination of Protestants such a form of worship as their conscience most approves of : and, at the same time, protecting the life, the property, the reputation and credit of the *meanest* subject, by a mode of administering justice so fair and equal, as no other country can boast of ?—These surely are blessings for which it well becomes us to be thankful — blessings wherein all, from the highest to the lowest, have a common interest : which even bad men avail themselves of ; and which every good man will be solicitous to preserve and perpetuate in their full extent.

But in vain shall we build upon these hopes, except we lay the foundation in religion and virtue, and *dwell together in unity*. This is the only sure ground of social happiness ! Thence arises the firm and lasting fabric of public

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good: and if the practice of virtue be attended with present happiness in any instance, it is particularly so in this; since whatever we contribute to the order and harmony of society will, in the course of circulation, return to us again, and stamp a greater value upon every blessing by the safety and security with which we may enjoy it. Let then the ablest politician take religion for his guide, and see whither it will lead him.—Does he wish to maintain the authority of law; to secure a due respect to the person of the magistrate, and a proper sense of subordination among the several offices, ranks, and stations? Religion prepares and disposes the hearts of men to second these views; puts them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers; to obey magistrates; not to speak evil of dignities, nor *to think more highly of themselves than they ought to think, but to think soberly*\*.—Is he anxious to supply the various exigencies of government, and to provide for its defence against external attacks? Religion asserts and vindicates his claim: commands *to render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's—to pay tribute to whom tribute is due: custom to whom custom: fear to whom*

\* Rom. xii. 3.

fear,

*fear, and honor to whom honor\*.* — Is he solicitous to secure the internal peace and tranquillity of the state, against the sudden insurrections and *madness of the people*? — Here too religion lends its aid, and assists him with its most awful sanctions: not only warning *them that are unruly*, and to withdraw from *those that walk disorderly*, but declaring that *they who do such things shall not escape the judgment of God*. And indeed, as true wisdom must ever consider the fear of God, and the sanctions of religion, as the strongest cement of civil union, and what gives the operations of government their main strength, consistency and firmness; so if there be any reason to apprehend, and it is to be feared there is too much, that a growing indifference to these great principles may produce an equal indifference to the public welfare—if we observe a temper springing up, presumptuous, headstrong, violent, impatient of restraint, either from religion or law—if perverted notions of liberty be infused by design, and propagated with industry—the sublime mysteries of our holy faith most impiously blasphemed; and, together with the sacred offices of religion, ridiculed, and pa-

\* Rom. xiii. 7.

rodiel,

rodiéd, and made the wanton sport of profligacy and ignorance!—It will surely be a becoming part in the friends of virtue and religion of every rank and order, to be awake and attentive to all the means that may restore the influence of religious principle, so necessary to the support and enforcement of authority, and to preserve the generous spirit of the constitution in its full health and vigour.

To effectuate this, in some degree, examples of order, sobriety, and piety, especially if they descend, as they always should descend, from the higher to the lower ranks, might be of great use. For nothing is more certain than that wherever the great and good declare themselves publicly on the side of virtue—wherever they are seen to manifest a zeal for religion, by an exemplary attendance on religious worship, such a conduct is constantly found not only to confirm, but increase the number of the virtuous. The pure lamp of piety that is a light to their own path, at the same time diffuses its lustre on all around them: and such bright examples in the superior stations of life, by a kind of silent admonition, operate more powerfully, and

make a more lasting impression on the public manners, than the most enticing words of human wisdom.

In a word, a just sense of the obligations we are under, to dwell together in unity, and of the national happiness that must ever result from it, as it gives the noblest idea we can frame of the wisdom of any people, so religion offers the most exalted motives to attain it: conducting us along the chain of temporal interests, by which we are here united as brethren, fellow-citizens, and members of the pure and reformed Church of Christ, up to those eternal interests that are fastened to the throne of God; and to that innumerable company of angels, and the spirits of just men made perfect, with whom, and with one another, we have it in our power to live immortal friends and companions throughout all eternity.

## SERMON III.

A FORGIVING AND CHARITABLE DISPOSITION RECOMMENDED AND ENFORCED.

ROM. xii. 21.

*Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.*

THE great apostle of the Gentiles, having executed the principal design of this epistle, which was to explain to the converts at Rome, the nature and effects of the faith they had embraced; and having shewn both the Jews and Romans, who seem to have been jealous of their respective privileges, that the christian dispensation was graciously intended to be of universal comprehension; he proceeds, towards the conclusion, to enforce the observance of such virtues, as would not only advance the honor of religion; but at

the same time secure, if any thing could secure to them, a quiet and unmolested enjoyment of it. Many excellent rules, and those of perpetual obligation, are in this, and the following chapter, brought together for that purpose: some to restrain our passions, others to subdue our pride; and all drawn from the consideration that we are *every one* members of that body, of which Christ himself is the head. Accordingly he reminds us, that as the offspring of one common Father, we are to be *kindly affectioned one to another*. As members of society, and under the ties of allegiance to government, we are to be *subject to the legal commands of the higher powers*: and, as followers of the meek, and merciful author of our religion, we are to *recompense no man evil for evil: not to revenge ourselves, but to give place unto wrath: not to be overcome of evil, but to overcome evil with good*.

I. By *evil* is here meant all kinds of injurious treatment, whether it proceed from words or actions: and to be *overcome of evil*, is to be so deeply affected with the *sense* of injury, for totally *insensible* we cannot be, as to yield up our reason to the overbearing force  
of

of our passions. To these leading principles of our nature, is the advice in the text more immediately directed: and, like many other precepts of our religion, is wisely adapted to both. As *sensible beings*, it supposes that we must be affected with *evil*, as *rational agents*, it expects that we should *not be overcome* of it.—And this is all that *reason* could do, till *religion*, by the aid of more exalted considerations, works up the human powers to a resemblance of the divine perfections, and disposes us to *overcome evil with good*.

Now with regard to the negative part of this duty, or the not being overcome of evil, it must be allowed, that cases will often happen, wherein men, considered as intelligent and sensible beings, may not only resent injurious treatment;—but, on a principle of self-preservation, if they cannot avert it by prudence, may endeavour to repel it by power. Hence it is that our very nature takes the alarm upon the bare apprehension of an injury; and instantly forms the countenance into a picture of resentment, lest the powers of language should be too slow in deterring the adversary from his malevolent purpose.

The mind also will be as sensibly affected by the *evil* of calumny, or unjust aspersion; as the body is by pain inflicted, or mischief done to it.—And in these cases to *feel* cannot be blameable, because it is natural; provided we do not cherish that feeling to the purpose of *revenge*.—On the other hand, a disposition to *do good* is likewise natural; at least, intended by the gracious author of our nature that it should be so: being the source of all those generous and benevolent affections that promote the social happiness of mankind. But the injuries, the diskindnesses, and the ungrateful returns we meet with; (for these are the *evils* implied in the text) must spring from a very different principle. Reason and humanity, can have no share in the production; and religion is *known* by more lovely *fruits*. Whence is it then that men are so prone both to do, and to be overcome of evil?—that men especially who profess a religion, the very spirit of which is composed of meekness, forbearance, benevolence, and charity, should ever indulge a temper the very reverse of all this? Whence, but because we *are* men? and have added many *acquired*, to some *natural*, imperfections; suffering a hasty temper to give

give those affronts that a fretful one is weak enough to complain of:—and even when really injured, seldom proportioning our resentment to the wrong done, but to our own misconceptions of it. Then it is, that *pride* assumes the lead, and gives the tone to every other passion. Stimulated by a mistaken sense of *honor*, a temper of this cast will glory in a quick sensibility of injuries and offences; and in a spirit ever ready to revenge them.—But what are the offences at which our *pride* is so apt to be piqued, and which our lofty spirit is so hasty to punish? Seldom such as threaten us with any great calamity:—possibly, nothing but the honest freedom of our friends: or, perhaps, the slights and incivility of our acquaintance; the raillery of the witty, the indiscretion of the weak, or the impertinence of the vain.—And can *these* offences justify the injurious returns, or the uneasiness of mind they too commonly create?—*Pride*, indeed, may feel itself hurt by such littlenesses; and may therefore put on the appearance of *spirit*, to conceal the want of *virtue*: but a truly great mind, elevated by a consciousness of its own integrity, will be equally above the *reach* of these petty insults, and the *resentment* of

them. Accordingly, the royal moralist places these different characters in their proper light. *It is an honor, says he, for a man to cease from strife\* : but he that is of a proud heart stirreth it up.*

And yet the mutual, but concealed animosities that so often disturb the harmony and tranquillity of social life, do not always proceed from a *passionate, proud, and captious temper*.—To little fermentations of this kind, which *may* for a time disturb and ruffle us, but will soon subside and grow bright again, the most generous spirits are sometimes liable. But there are others of a darker complexion, which the apostle derives from a fouler source: and ascribes the most pernicious effects of them to a more prevalent, because a more *selfish* principle.—*From whence, says he, come wars and fightings among you? those fierce contentions which disturb the peace and harmony of society?—come they not hence, even of your lusts + ? from interfering interests, and eager competitions; which, like the violent concussion of hard and massy bodies, drive*

Prov. xx. 3. + James iv. 5.

every

every softer substance from between them.—Alas! we forget who hath told us that *a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which be possessest* \*: we deny the position, that *godliness is great riches*, if *a man be content with that he bath* †.—The wanted something is ever in our thoughts: and we overlook the blessings around us, by straining the eye at some distant object that we are impatient to grasp; till perhaps another seizes it, which is *a pain and grief to us*. We have, indeed, distinct and separate interests as *individuals*; and by all honest means may diligently pursue them. We have likewise *common interests as members of society*: interests that are confirmed to us by *law*, protected by *government*, and secured by the most awful *sanctions of religion*; and all thus *aptly fitted and framed together*, constitute that admired fabric of civil and religious liberty, at whose sacred altar every *selfish consideration* should fall a voluntary victim. And, if we can possibly be *insensible* to these invaluable blessings; or dissatisfied, because, in our own opinion, we have not a sufficient share of them:—If *we*.

\* Luke xiii. 15.

† 1 Tim. vi. 6.

who

who have been called unto liberty, use it only for an occasion to the flesh, and not by love to serve one another; which, in St. Paul's opinion, is the noblest use of it; and if, as he strongly expresses it, we bite and devour one another; let us, however, take heed that we be not consumed one of another\*.

II. But the advice in the text is not confined to the negative part of our duty: it opens the heart to the most humane and generous conduct: and, while it aims to preserve our own temper serene and contented, will at the same time render it *beneficent*, as well as *inoffensive*, to the rest of mankind. Both these advantages will naturally result from the practice of it. *Be not overcome of evil*, and you will be easy and happy in yourselves.—*Overcome evil with good*, and you will give happiness to others. And surely, some indulgencies of this kind are due to the common infirmities of nature. We are all *men of like passions*; how much soever we may differ in the power of governing them: so that if any cause of contention should arise between

\* Gal. v. 15,

such;

such; lest anger should provoke anger, and pride produce pride, what more proper conduct can we hold, than what the apostle recommends, to *let our moderation be known unto all men* \*?—than to be *kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God, for Christ's sake, hath forgiven us* †.

And is not this what the very constitution of our nature, and the connexions of society expect from us?—Why are both our *rational* and *animal* powers so wisely adapted to the mutual aid and assistance of each other? Why doth so much of our present happiness depend on the interchangeable offices of social life? but to teach us how *helpless* we are as individuals; how *happy* when we *dwell together in unity*? Besides, the greater difficulties a good man has found, and some difficulties the very best *will* find, in subduing the perverseness of his own temper, and as it were to *overcome* himself, the greater compassion he will have for that of others. To such a temper, directed by reason, and undisturbed by

\* Phil. iv. 5.

† Eph. iv. 32.

passion,

passion, the communications of benevolence are ever attended with the most pleasing reflections. A prevailing disposition to do good, will not preclude even injurious objects. It is enough that they partake of our common nature; and may possibly have their perverseness subdued, or their happiness enlarged, by what is in the power of a generous mind to do. And therefore to obey the tender impulse of humanity, to extinguish our resentments, to cease from wrath, and let go displeasure; and instead of lifting up the hand to punish, kindly to extend it as a pledge of pardon,—are principles of right conduct that must have the approbation of every unprejudiced mind: especially when we consider, that *the merciful man doeth good to his soul; but he that is cruel troubleth his own flesh* \*.

From these unwearied endeavours in struggling with, and surmounting our own frailties, and overcoming those of others, results the true idea of human virtue.—Firm, and invariable, in the pursuit of whatever is right, and just, and good, the strongest efforts of malicious

\* Prov. xi. 17.

imputa-

imputation will have no other effect on such a character, than to call forth its brightest excellencies, and to convert even *envy* into *admiration*. Hence those shining proofs of humanity, generosity, and public spirit;—of hardy patience, contempt of danger, and heroic fortitude, which adorn the pages of antient history.—But why need we have recourse to the records of heathen virtue, when the sacred history of our religion furnisheth us with more authentic, more glorious, more instructive examples?—Recollect only those of *Moses* to the Israelites, of *Joseph* to his brethren, of *David* to *Saul*; and you will thence learn, that no provocation can be carried so high, but a virtuous and great mind will be superior to the desire of revenge, and not be *overcome of evil*: as also, that the most perverse and obdurate heart, if it have any remains of virtue left, may be melted down with kindness, and *overcome with good*.

After all, whatsoever motives may be drawn from the reasonableness of this duty, and the dignity of human nature, to recommend the practice of it; they will still want the aid of religious principle—reverential awe of that

Being

Being to *whom vengeance belongeth*, to form it into a *fixt and habitual disposition*. Then also will the streams of our benevolence flow in a constant and even course, when they spring from a sense of that infinite mercy and goodness, from which the christian dispensation itself took its rise.—To *overcomie evil with good*, in the largest sense of the words,—to *expiate the sins that had separated between God and us*;—to extend the sphere of our benevolence beyond the narrow circle of partial affection; and to strengthen the ties of every moral and social duty by an express revelation of the righteous judgment of God; were the great objects which the divine author of it had in view in all that he *did*, and in all that he *suffered* for us—Thus, if we consider him in his *life*, it exhibits to us the most perfect model of meekness, forbearance, and benevolence, that the world ever beheld: if in his *doctrine*, the whole tendency of it is fitted to excite the warmest gratitude to God, the most disinterested affection for each other. One of the first lessons he taught us was to *love our very enemies*: the last words he spake were to *pray for his own*—and that divine philanthropy which he appointed to be the chief

*distinction*

distinction of his religion, will ever be the best support of it: for hereby shall all men know that we are his disciples, if we have love one to another.\*

Such is the mild, and benevolent spirit of christianity!—All is the language of *charity*, *peace*, and *love*! and is it not the language of *truth*? making its way to the heart by a direct appeal to the reason and good sense of mankind, and convincing us, that a forgiving temper, enlarged affections, and a generous return of good for evil, are the highest excellencies of human nature; though but a faint resemblance of that merciful Being, who dispenseth the ordinary blessings of his providence to the evil, and to the good; and *sendeth rain upon the just, and upon the unjust.*

On these principles the sincere and faithful christian considers all the *evils*, that may now befall him, as so many trials of his virtue:—as so many occasions given him of obtaining the most glorious of all *victories*, that of *overcoming the world*. He uses his utmost efforts to acquire this happy temper of mind, as among the uncertain events of this life, almost

\* John xiii. 35.

every thing he has to do with, calls for the exercise of it.—He knows *it must needs be that offences come*; but it is not for him to denounce *woe to that man by whom the offence cometh*. He knows also that crosses and disappointments will happen; and that ill offices may sometimes be done, either by the spitefulness of the envious, or the selfishness of the covetous.—And if, to *these evils of life*, which the perverseness of man may bring upon him, be added those of disease and pain, which are founded in the very frame and constitution of his nature; how *few and evil* would *the days of his life* be, and how little of ease and happiness would he taste, though possessed of all the *visible* means of procuring them, should he by a fretful, impatient, and revengeful temper, be perpetually multiplying the causes of his disquiet: or by an unmanly weakness, aggravate every *little evil* into a calamity, instead of *overcoming* it by his fortitude.—No! he hath *not so learned Christ*, but *considering him who endured such contradiction of sinners against himself*, even while he *daily endeavoured to do them good*, he will look up to God, as the sole disposer of his happiness, and to religion as the surest means that lead to it.

So

So that whatever he may suffer from the malice of his fellow-creatures; for men are often the instruments of providence to inflict the evils, as well as to convey the blessings of life; he hath still the assurance of truth itself for his comfort, *that all things will finally work together for good, to them, who by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory, and honor, and immortality\**.

Upon the whole; there is nothing more certain, than that most of the injuries and diskindnesses we meet with, proceed from the same *weakness* or *want* of principle, which gives them their keenest edge, and renders them so capable to disquiet and torment us. Had we more of the true spirit of religion among us, we should either have fewer ill offices done, or less inclination to return them. Christian *charity* which *thinketh no evil*, would certainly never *do* any: for *charity suffereth long*, and at last, *is kind*; *is not easily provoked*; or, if it should, *is easy to be intreated*; and to its many amiable properties, this also may be added, that *it will not be overcome of evil*, but will ever be disposed to *overcome evil with good*.

\* Rom. ii. 7.

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## SERMON IV.

THE NECESSITY OF PIETY AND VIRTUE,  
BOTH TO PROMOTE AND SECURE PRE-  
SENT AND FUTURE HAPPINESS.

MATT. vi. 33.

*But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.*

**A**MONGST other important offices to which our blessed Lord was pleased to condescend, was that of a *teacher sent from God*. In this character he endeavoured to raise and exalt human nature to the highest pitch of happiness of which it was capable. The whole plan of his instructions, and particularly that of his sermon on the mount, points out the only sure way of attaining that happiness: but it could only be attained by

a spirit of contentment, purity, and holiness, in the conduct of our lives. Thus, in that part of his divine discourse immediately preceding the direction in the text, he had cautioned his followers against a fault, to which, he, who knew what was in man, well knew that mankind in general were too prone; viz. an inordinate care and thoughtfulness for the things of this life—an over-eager desire of its conveniences, and uneasy apprehensions of wanting the necessaries of it, such as meat, and drink, and clothing. He shewed them the weakness and folly of such conduct by arguments, drawn from the consideration of God's gracious providence over creatures far inferior to man; even *the fowls of the air*, and *the lilies of the field*; leaving them to conclude, how much more concerned the universal parent must be for the comfortable subsistence and preservation of man, the noblest part of the creation. He observes that the *gentiles*, who were strangers to the extent of God's power and goodness, should be solicitous for these things, was indeed no wonder: but for his *disciples*, for *christians*, to whom he was about to reveal far nobler objects of their regard, by opening to their view, the *blessings* of

of immortality, which his merits had recovered for them,—for such to be ever seeking the accommodations and enjoyments of this life, or to despair of procuring the common necessities of it, would be highly blameable, and inconsistent with the first principles of religion; which taught them, that their holy Father, who first *gave* them their life, and knows what they have need of for its *subsistence*, would take care that nothing truly necessary for their present support and preservation should be wanting to them:—*seek ye first*, says he, *the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.*

This advice is given in very plain terms, as all advice should be; and what I shall deliver upon it, I will endeavour to express with equal plainness. But here you will observe, that by the expression in the text of the *kingdom of God and his righteousness*, is meant, that state of endless bliss and happiness, which God hath prepared for them that love him; for them who shall have acted in this state of probation, agreeably to those eternal rules of justice and moral rectitude, which he hath

written upon the consciences of all men, and expressly enjoined in the revelation of his will. To make these the principal objects of our attention and practice, is what our blessed Lord here recommends to us, both as our duty and our interest: since, if God sees that we sincerely endeavour to do his will, (and neither our thoughts nor actions can escape his notice), we may rest assured, that he will so bless our industry, and prosper the work of our hands, that not only food and raiment; but whatever else may be needful for us in our respective stations, will be amply supplied by his good providence.

The proposition therefore which offers itself to our consideration is this, “ that a steady course of virtue and piety, directed by a serious concern for our eternal happiness, is a much more certain way to obtain all things necessary for a comfortable subsistence in this life, than our utmost care and solicitude without it.”

I shall, however, first endeavour to convince you of this truth, and then leave it upon your minds with a suitable application.

That the providence of God governs the world which he made, and interposes in the affairs of mankind, (though we cannot always account for the reasons of his proceedings,) is a truth established by such strong, unanswerable arguments, drawn from the nature and reason of things, and from the sense and experience of all ages, that I need not at this time enter into the proof of it.

Now if the providence of God doth thus concern itself in the affairs of mankind in general, and if it be constantly exercised, as it certainly must, agreeably to the rules of wisdom and justice, we may reasonably presume that it will be particularly attentive, upon the whole, to the good and happiness of those who sincerely love and worship God ; live in a dutiful dependence upon his favor, and in a constant obedience to his laws. —A tender father, according to his power and ability, will take care that a dutiful child be supplied with whatever is necessary and convenient for him ; and how much more will our heavenly Father, who is goodness itself, and hath all nature at his command, be disposed to provide for such of *his* children

as make it their study and delight to please and serve, and honor and obey him !

Nevertheless, it is not to be expected that God, in the exercise of his providence, will invariably distinguish the most faithful of his servants with the choicest of his blessings in this world. The comforts and conveniences of this life are neither the proper, nor the only *rewards* of virtue : much less are they to be considered as *proofs* of it ; for then we should look upon the *richest* men, as the most *righteous* ; which sad experience too often contradicts. So that although the different states of riches and poverty may be said to result from the natural and ordinary course of events ; yet, as they both furnish the means of trial to human virtue, the divine wisdom, which knows what is fittest for us, and what we can bear, better than we ourselves do, may so dispose and order the course of things, that the present circumstances of the good man, shall be such, as will least endanger his future happiness. Upon this principle it was, that the wise Agar thus petitioned the Almighty : *Give me neither poverty nor riches ; feed me with food convenient for me : lest I be full,*

*full, and deny thee, and say, who is the Lord?  
or lest I be poor, and steal, and take the name  
of my God in vain \*.*

Thus to refer himself, and his condition in life, to the supreme disposer of all events, will be every one's truest wisdom: and he may rest assured, that of those temporal things that God sees to be necessary and convenient, a proper measure and degree shall in no wise be withheld from him. His prayers and his endeavours will not fail to procure what he really wants; and the man who has that, has no real occasion for any thing more. But these plain and obvious conclusions are still further confirmed by the authority of the scriptures, which for the good man's greater encouragement to trust and rely on the providence of God, speak clearly and positively to this point. Indeed, after the gracious assurance that Christ himself hath given us in the text, there can be no great occasion to mention many others. Consider, however, some out of the many, that will naturally occur to you.—*They that seek the Lord, says*

\* *Prov. xxx. 8, 9.*

holy David, *shall want no manner of thing that is good*\*, — and elsewhere, *put thy trust in God, and be doing good, and verily thou shalt be fed*†. — *Cast thy burthen upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee, and shall not suffer thy righteousness to be moved*‡. Of the same purport are the exhortations of the apostles. *Be careful (or anxious) for nothing*, says St. Paul; *but in every thing by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, make your requests known unto God*||—*Casting all your care upon him*, says St. Peter, *for he careth for you*§.

When therefore, you have used your best endeavours with prudence and diligence, and honest industry, which are always presupposed, for the supply of your necessities; trouble yourselves no further, but leave the rest to God: for you are then in the best hands, even in his who cannot, will not fail you. Whereas, fretfulness, anxiety, and keeping our thoughts always upon the stretch after the things of the world, (a method which too many take to acquire them) very often prove vain and

\* Psalm xxxiv. 10.

† Psalm xxxvii. 3.

‡ Psalm lv. 22.

|| Philip. iv. 6, 7.

§ 1 Pet. v. 7.

deceitful,

deceitful, and fail of the end so eagerly sought for. And not only so, but it seems to be little less than a contempt; and, as it were, a defiance of providence, for men to presume entirely upon their own strength and ability, and to think that they can do more for themselves, than God can do.—At least it argues too much distrust of his providence and care for them: and therefore, no wonder that God should set himself to oppose, and resolve to defeat and blast the designs of such men as presumptuously aim at being wiser and stronger than the Almighty, from whom alone *all good things do come.*

It is also to be feared, that an over-eager desire and solicitude for the things of this world, will not always be governed by the most upright and honest intentions. When men set their whole hearts upon an object, and pursue it with a determined resolution to obtain what they seek, they are not apt to be so careful, as they should be, about the lawfulness of the means: intent only upon success, they overlook the scruples that are started by conscience; or, driving on too furiously, they leave all scruples behind them; but they will not long be left behind, for conscience

conscience is often found to press close upon the heels of success, and to arrest the unjust in the midst of enjoyment. And, indeed, when men prosecute their designs by unwarrantable and wicked means, they have much more reason to fear a *curse* from God, than to expect a *blessing* upon them. For, *except the Lord build the house*, except the providence of God approve and promote our designs, as he always will, when they are founded on the rock of truth and justice, *their labour is but lost that build it*.—And *except the Lord give the increase*, *it is but lost labour that men waste to rise up early, and so late take rest, and eat the bread of carefulness* \*.

\* Do not however mistake, as if by what has been said, it were meant that you should live without any care of your own, but are to rely entirely upon providence for all things necessary for you.—Nothing in this discourse of our blessed Lord was intended to encourage sloth or idleness, even in the most pious christians. It is not *all care* and thought for worldly goods that is here forbidden, but a

\* Psalm cxxvii. 1, 3.

vicious

vicious unreasonable care for them;—which it then is, when the degree of our care exceeds the worth of the thing cared for: when we are more concerned about things *temporal*, than for those that are *eternal*: when we are more solicitous to obtain the perishing riches of this world, than the never-fading happiness of the next: when our care is accompanied with fear and anxiety, with doubtfulnes and distrust: when it renders us fretful and uneasy; impatient for success, and tormented at disappointment.—In short, when we will needs carve for ourselves, and are unwilling that God should govern the world as he pleases.

This is the faulty care and thoughtlessness here condemned, and a more prudent conduct recommended instead of it: a care that will make us wise, and good, and happy, both here and hereafter. For if we make it our first and principal care to *seek the kingdom of God and his righteousness*, recommending ourselves to his favor and protection, by a virtuous and holy life, then may we be careful and attentive to our present interests, in a degree subservient to that more exalted view;

and

and by our diligence and industry improve every opportunity that providence shall put in our power, not only to procure the necessary supplies of food and raiment for ourselves, but a comfortable subsistence for our families and dependents, and *that we may have to give to him that needeth.* *For if any provide not for his own, saith the apostle, and especially for those of his own house (or kindred); he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel\**.

And now in applying what has been said, I need not detain you long. For since our divine master hath taught us how to obtain whatever we *really* stand in need of, without fretting and disquieting ourselves in the search of it, to what can I better persuade you than to learn and practise a lesson which will amply repay your pains and diligence? You would certainly think that man happy who had one sure and easy method of procuring for himself whatever he wanted—Every one of you here present may be that happy person, if he will but *seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness*—This is the short but sure way

\* 1 Tim. v. 8.

of arriving at the end which every wise and good man aims at. He that by *living soberly, righteously and godly, in this present world, seeks for glory and honor, and immortality in the next,* takes the readiest and most certain course of recommending himself to the favor and blessing of God, even *in this present world:* and he who has once secured, and is careful to preserve that, may rest assured that, upon the whole, nothing that is necessary or convenient shall be wanting to him.

Again, then, let me exhort you *to seek the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all those things shall be added unto you.* Or, if after all, some things should be denied you, which you may be apt enough to think would be good and convenient for you; do not, however, murmur or repine at your condition, but piously submit to the wise appointment of providence. You may be mistaken, but God cannot: and he who knoweth all things, must know what is better for you, than you can possibly do.—*Cast then all your care upon him after you have done your own part, for he careth for you. Put your trust in him, and be doing good, and verily you shall be fed.* Be

*content*

*content with such things as ye have, for he hath said, I will never leave you nor forsake you \*.—But be your lot never so hard : be the difficulties and wants you struggle with, never so great in this world ; yet if you do but sincerely obey your Saviour's commandments in seeking the kingdom of God and his righteousness, you will have this comfortable assurance to support you under them, that these temporal sufferings, which, comparatively speaking, are but for a moment, will work for you an exceeding and eternal weight of glory †.*

\* Heb. xiii. 5.

† 2 Cor. iv. 17.

S E R.

## SERMON V.

KEEPING THE COMMANDMENTS INDISPENSABLY NECESSARY TO THE ATTAINMENT OF ETERNAL LIFE.

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MATT. xix. 16.

*And behold, one came and said unto him, good Master, what good thing shall I do; that I may have eternal Life?*

AS there cannot be a more important question than this which is here stated; so there never was a person so capable of answering it as he to whom it was proposed: for he who had *the words of eternal life*, best knew on what conditions it was to be obtained. In order, therefore, to render a discourse on this subject as useful as I can, I shall, in the first place, offer some plain and obvious remarks upon the question itself;

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and

and then consider the general instruction contained in the answer to it.

I. And here, a brief enquiry into the character and disposition of the person who proposed this question to our blessed Lord, may be of some use to engage your most serious attention to a matter in which your everlasting happiness is so deeply interested.

Now from the account given by three of the Evangelists\* of this person, we learn, that he was a *young man*, of a religious disposition, of considerable fortune, and an eminent station; for he was *a ruler of the Jews*; having been raised, as we may well suppose, by his great merit, to a degree of rank and authority beyond his years. But happy though he was in the enjoyment of all the comforts of *this life*, he knew that sooner or later, death would for ever separate him from them; and was therefore solicitous to know by what means he might attain to endless happiness in the *next life*. His mind seems to have been long intent upon this important

\* Matt. xix. 16—22. Mark x. 17—22. Luke xviii. 18—25.

confide-

consideration; and his conduct therein holds forth a very commendable example, to young persons in general, to remember their *Creator in the days of their youth*; and to build their hopes of everlasting felicity on the solid ground of virtue and religion. What application he had made to the teachers who then *sat in Moses' seat*, or what satisfaction soever he might have received from them, it doth not seem to have set his mind at rest; but he had no sooner heard of the *fame of Jesus*, with what authority he taught, and with what miraculous powers he proved himself to be a *teacher sent from God*, than he was impatient to have recourse to such a divine instructor. —It had not escaped his observation, that young persons are often snatched out of this world, as well as people of more advanced years; and therefore he would not for a moment, now he had so fair an opportunity, put off being instructed in the knowledge of a matter of such eternal consequence, as his salvation, to any future time; and much less to a death-bed; that sad season of uneasiness and distraction, when the *best* men are often deprived of the use of reason and understanding: but was determined to seize the present

occasion while he was blessed with life, and youth, and health, and vigour ; and while he might reasonably hope to have time to perform whatever duties should be required of him : herein likewise affording a good example to all young persons, not to defer a due preparation for eternity, from a fond presumption that they have yet many years of life to come ; but to set about that necessary work immediately, since they *know not what a day may bring forth*, or how soon they may be cut off, and sent to their account, with all their unrepented sins and failings on their head.

That these were our young man's sentiments, appears from what the Evangelist says, that he came *running* to Jesus, as if impatient to ask his advice and receive his instructions. And yet with all his eagerness and impatience, he was nevertheless so collected in himself, that he no sooner approached our blessed Lord, than he presented his request in the most respectful and humble posture ; for, as another Evangelist \* reports it,

the

\* Mark x. 17. " And when he was gone forth into  
" the way, there came one running, and kneeled to him,  
" and

the young man *kneeled down*, and said, as in the text, *good master! what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?*

This was not a question of impertinent curiosity, like those of the unbelieving Sadducees; it was not put with a view to ensnare and *entangle* our blessed Lord; it did not turn upon a point of political duty, as when the scribes and pharisees sought occasion to charge him with disaffection to Cæsar and the Roman government.—It was a question propounded with an honest and serious desire of being instructed in the way to Heaven and happiness. It was, indeed, a question which none but Christ was fully qualified to resolve; and one reason for his coming down from Heaven was, that he might resolve it: for it was through him and his gospel, that *life and immortality were brought to light*.—We may, however, observe that our Saviour, before he returned a direct answer to the enquirer, took occasion to animadvert upon the title of *Good Master*,

“ and asked, good master, what shall I do that I may *in-herit* eternal life?” Mark and Luke both use the word *κληρονομήσω*, rendered by *inherit*.—Matthew alone uses the word *ἔχω*, rendered by *have*.

by which the young man had addressed him.  
“ Why,” says he, “ calleſt thou *me* good; me,  
“ whose true character thou art not yet ac-  
“ quainted with? Is it because the Jewish  
“ Rabbies are vain enough to affect a title  
“ which no mere man can justly claim? No!  
“ there is none perfectly good but one; the eter-  
“ nial and self-existent God, the author of all  
“ goodness; and from whom cometh every  
“ good and perfect gift.—But with regard to thy  
“ question, if thou wilt enter into life, and have  
“ thy virtue rewarded by a blessed immorta-  
“ lity, *keep the commandments*: be careful to  
“ do the will of God; a sincere obedience to  
“ which, being the only sure means of ob-  
“ taining the happiness thou so ardently af-  
“ pireſt after.”

Such was the question, and such the answer! the one as necessary, as the other is instructive; and both the one and the other equally resulting from, and applying to, the natural desires, and hopes, and fears, of every reasonable and accountable being! and yet although the final destiny of millions may daily depend upon putting this question to themselves, too many, it is to be feared, are regardless of the answer.

We are all indeed ready enough to enquire how we may be happy in this life: and even that enquiry is both natural and desireable; our wise and good Creator having so wrought a sense of happiness into the frame and constitution of our nature, that we cannot but desire it. Thus our reason and appetites are ever prompting us to wish for and pursue our own good; that is, to be happy: and did we always act with reason, and not suffer ourselves to be misled by our appetites, which are apt to call that happiness which is not really so; we should undoubtedly attain it. But then we should do well to remember, that the happiness of this world, even when it is attained, is liable to frequent interruptions; and at best is but transitory and of short duration. For it can last no longer than the frail and transitory life whereon it depends, which must soon come to an end: and in that day *all our thoughts, all our schemes of earthly happiness, perish.*

But the happiness of the next life, when we *enter* into it, will be quite of another nature; will be pure and permanent, an *inher-*

*ritance incorruptible, and that fadeth not way: Great as the goodness of God can make it; Lasting as the infinite author who hath promised it; for the things that are seen are temporal: the things which are not seen are eternal: and our souls being created for immortality, such of them as shall be counted worthy to obtain a better resurrection, will be like the angels of God, glorious, unchangeable, and intelligent: confirmed in a state of unalterable and perfect bliss; and drinking deep of those pure and intellectual pleasures that are at God's right hand for evermore.*

Who then, but must be as solicitous to enquire how this eternal life is to be obtained as the young man himself was? Well might he suppose that some *good thing* was to be *done*, some extraordinary service was to be performed, to be entitled to a reward so lasting and glorious.—And yet there is another point of no less importance included in the question, though not expressed in it; and that is, how a state of eternal misery is to be avoided? for all men, being immortal, are certainly designed to pass into some future state of existence, after

after this life is ended. That state, the scriptures every where inform us, will either be happy or miserable, according to our behaviour here; and both eternal: so that if we do not endeavour to obtain the one, we must of necessity endure the other. Attend only to what the Saviour and judge of all men hath declared on the solemn subject. *The hour is coming*, says he, though the precise time is known only unto God, *when all that are in the grave shall hear his voice, and come forth: they that have done good unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation* \*.

We should do well, therefore, always to combine these two different states of eternity in our thoughts. By so doing, we shall perceive the whole meaning and extent of the question before us; and be more truly sensible of its infinite concern and importance. The influence of this united consideration will act upon the mind with double force; and even *the terrors of the Lord will persuade men to comply with the terms of his mercy and loving-kindness.*

\* John v. 28, 29.

What

What these terms are, and the general instruction contained in them, comes next to be considered.

II. And here I need scarce observe to you, that the answer which our divine master gave to the young man in particular, applies with equal propriety to Christians in general: and what Christ then said to him only, his everlasting gospel now says to every one here present; —*if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.* Is it then, your earnest desire and hope to pass, from the present state of trial and probation, whenever it may please God to close it, into everlasting mansions of bliss and glory? Would you be duly prepared for that awful hour, when an irreversible sentence of eternal happiness, or misery eternal, will be passed upon you by the great Judge of all men? —*make haste, then, and prolong not the time to keep his commandments*\*—be as earnest to comply with the terms of salvation, as the young man was to be informed of them: see that you *love* the Lord your God and *fear* him: observe his *sabbaths* and reverence his

\* Psalm cxix. 60.

holy

holyname—honour your parents, your governors, and instructors—wrong no man, do violence to no man; but love your neighbour as yourself; and act by all men, as you would have them act by you: so shall you enter into life, the infinite and supreme felicity of the life to come.

You see then, that to keep the commandments has the same meaning, and is of the same importance, as those other expressions of scripture, wherein we are exhorted to *do the will of our Father which is in heaven*\*—*to be holy in all manner of conversation*†—*to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts*, and to *live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world*.‡. All of which directions, as well as that in the text, plainly enough imply, that *virtue, and holiness of life here, is the only sure way to happiness hereafter.*

And, indeed, that *without holiness, or a sincere obedience to the divine laws, no man shall see the Lord*||, is a truth so agreeable to all our notions of the divine perfections; is

\* Matt. vii. 21.

† 1 Pet. i. 15.

‡ Tit. ii. 12.

|| Heb. xii. 14.

so necessary a qualification for an inhabitant of heaven; is so suitable to the majesty of those glorious mansions which the Almighty fills with his immediate presence: that, even if the scriptures had been silent on this point, our reason alone must have suggested to us, how impossible it must be for any thing of an *impure* nature to be admitted where all is *holy, just, and good*. No! in vain shall we hope to *enter into life*, except we *keep the commandments*. All the precepts of the gospel, its promises, and its threatenings, all concur in this unalterable determination, that the wicked shall go into *everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal*\*.

And yet plain and express as these declarations are, too many, it is to be feared, either never think of them with any degree of seriousness, or idly flatter themselves, that the happiness of a future state may be had upon easier terms than the uniform practice of so much virtue as is implied in keeping the commandments.—But what is most to be lamented is, that the Christian religion itself should be

\* Matt. xxv. 46.

so grossly perverted by those who pretend to be its genuine and most sincere professors, as not only to weaken, but effectually to destroy the influence of its awful sanctions; hence it is, that the Pope and his clergy, who assume to be the infallible interpreters of the laws of Christ, assume a power likewise to dispense with the observance, and to pardon the transgression of them; thus making a traffic of iniquity by selling indulgencies to sin; and leading their blind votaries in a perpetual circle of finning and confessing, absolving and finning again.

Nor has the cause of virtue and true religion been less injured by mistaking than perverting the sense of scripture. Thus we find some enthusiasts who maintain that their salvation depends not on their own endeavours, but on Christ's merits—that he having done all for them, nothing remains for themselves to do; a right *faith* being *the one thing needful*, without good *works*, or moral virtue. Others again have been led to believe, that all things being predetermined by God, if they *are of the number of the elect*, they cannot finally miscarry, be their conduct what it will:

will: but, if reprobated and doomed to destruction, they may as well indulge themselves in every vicious pleasure as not; since their punishment cannot be greater than it is already decreed they must inevitably suffer.

But, *let no man deceive you with vain words*, and do not by a false interpretation of scripture deceive yourselves. God hath endued us with moral liberty and freedom of will.—He hath *set before us life and death, blessing and cursing* \*; and put every man's eternal happiness in his own power. We may indeed rely upon the merits of Christ, to render our repentance available; and we are assured that through his mediation God will accept a  *sincere*, instead of a *perfect* obedience. But, had the almighty Creator from all eternity decreed who should be happy, and who should be miserable, where would have been the mercy, the goodness, the justice of God! If he hath already prejudged his creatures, wherefore are we told, on the highest authority, that *he hath appointed a day wherin to judge the world in righteousness* †, and to *render unto every man according to his works* ‡: wherefore are we told

\* Deut. xxx. 19.

† Acts xvii. 31.

‡ Rom. ii. 6.

also,

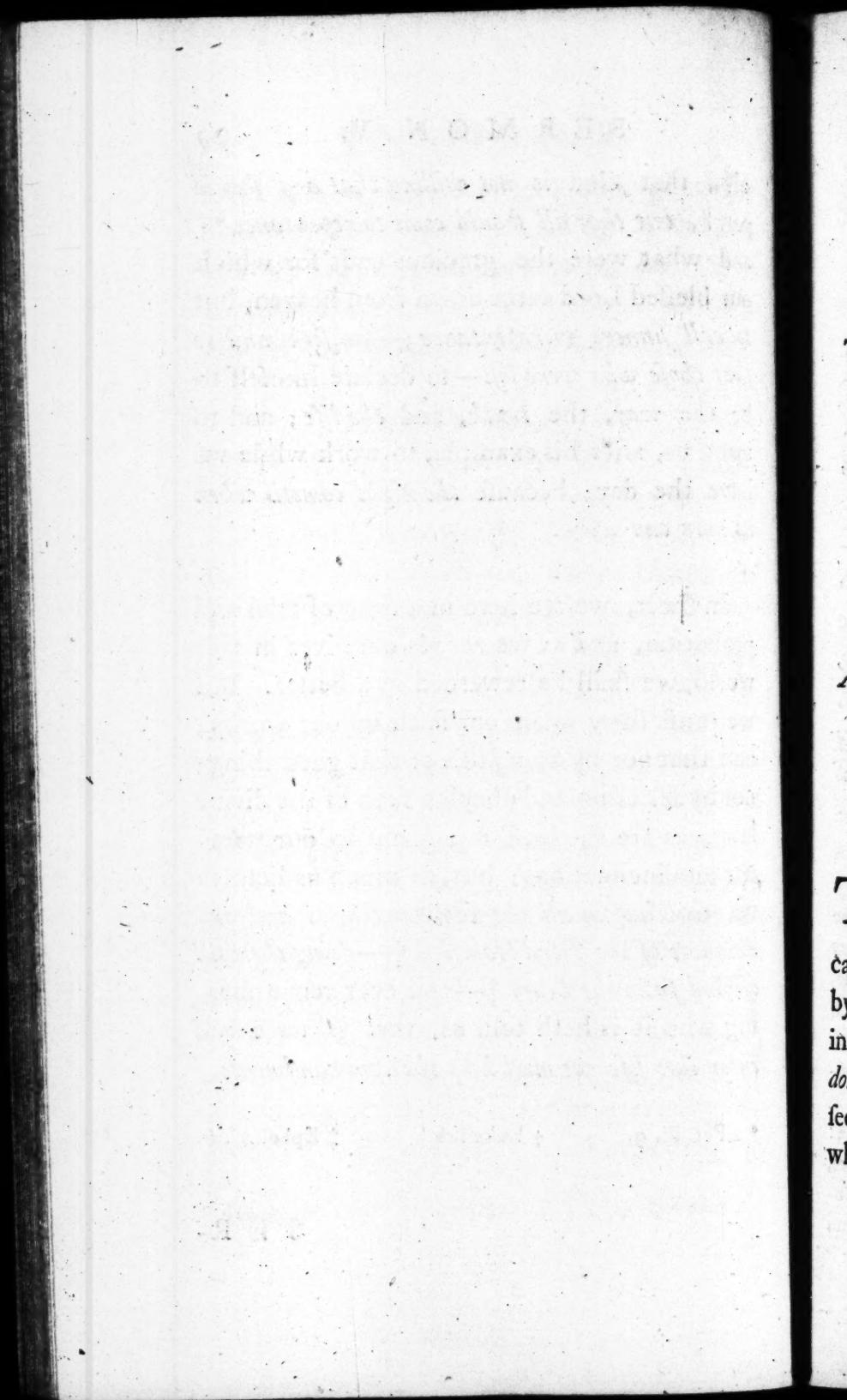
also, that God is *not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance*\*? and what were the gracious ends for which our blessed Lord came down from heaven, but *to call sinners to repentance*;—*to seek and to save those who were lost*—to declare himself to be the *way, the truth, and the life*; and to teach us, after his example, to work while we have the day; because *the night cometh when no man can work*.

In short, we are here in a state of trial and probation, and as we acquit ourselves in this world, we shall be rewarded in a better. But we must shew forth our faith by our works; and that not by doing this or that good thing; not by selecting and obeying such of the divine laws, as are the least repugnant to our temper and inclinations; but, as much as lieth in us, *walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless*†—*doing the will of God from the heart*‡—and ever remembering who it is hath told us, that *if we would enter into life we must keep the commandments*.

\* 2 Pet. iii. 9.

† Luke i. 6.

‡ Ephes. vi. 6.



## SERMON VI.

### THE NECESSITY OF MORAL DISCIPLINE FOR THE ATTAINMENT OF VIRTUE AND HAPPINESS.

I COR. ix. 25.

*And every man that striveth for the mastery,  
is temperate in all things: Now they do it  
to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an  
incorruptible.*

TO convince the Corinthians of his un-  
wearied and disinterested zeal in the  
cause of Christianity, and to animate them  
by his own example to a steady perseverence  
in the faith, and a *patient continuance in well-  
doing*, is the principal design which St. Paul  
seems to have had in view throughout this  
whole epistle; and which he pursues with a

strength of reasoning, and warmth of exhortation well suited to his purpose.

As he was well acquainted with the learning, the manners, and the customs of the politest parts of the world; so his topics of persuasion are often drawn from them accurately. The text is one of the many passages wherein he alludes to the custom of exhibiting a variety of public games in the most considerable cities of his time. This of Corinth was even proverbially noted for its expensive pleasures of every kind; and among the rest, for the splendor of *their* games and sports, which were distinguished from all others by a name taken from the particular situation of the place\* where they were celebrated.—

In

\* Corinth being situated in an isthmus, parting the Egean and Ionian seas, the public games celebrated every fifth year in that famous city, in honour of Neptune, were called Isthmia, or in English Isthmian.—It is indeed, contended by some authors, that the Isthmian games were instituted in honour of Melicertes. Others contend, that there were two distinct solemnities observed in the Isthmus, one to Melicertes, and another to Neptune: which opinion is grounded on the authority of Musæus, who wrote a treatise about the Isthmian games. Phavorinus

In the less corrupted ages of antiquity all these games seem to have been instituted with the commendable design, not only of exciting men to virtue, but of exercising them *in* it;—such

tinus (or Favorinus) reports that these games were first instituted in honour of Neptune, and afterwards celebrated in memory of Palæmon, called also Melicertes, and by the Latins Portunus, because they took him to be the God of Mariners. Ov. Met. 4. §41.

Plutarch, on the contrary, tells us, that the first institution of them was in honour of Melicertes, but afterwards they were altered, enlarged, and reinstated to Neptune by Theseus: he gives also several other opinions concerning the original of them.

These games, whatever may be their origin, were observed every third, or rather every fifth year, and held so sacred and inviolable, that when they had been intermitted for some time, through the oppression and tyranny of Cypselus, king of Corinth; after the tyrant's death, the Corinthians to renew the memory of them which was almost decayed, employed the utmost power and industry they were able in reviving them, and celebrated them with such splendor and magnificence as was never practised in former ages.

The victors were rewarded with garlands of pine-leaves; and afterwards with parsley. Afterwards the use of parsley was abolished, and the pine-leaves came again into request, for which alterations Plutarch has accounted in the 5th book of his Symposiacks, Quest. 3.

virtue, I mean, as sprung from the manners and sentiments of the times: for, when valour was accounted one of the noblest virtues, activity and strength might well be reckoned the most desirable endowments. The plan, indeed, was afterwards enlarged to views of public utility, and admitted competitions in works of genius, and literature, and the arts of civil life: but in the Apostle's time, they had departed even from the original spirit and design of the institution. What was at first a brave and disinterested emulation among the heroes of those days to excel in all the manly and athletic exercises; became afterwards, on many occasions at least, the mercenary employment of common men: and instead of that great simplicity wherewith they used to be celebrated, and that but at stated periods, they were then become a glaring proof of the luxury and profusion of the great; and a frequent, as well as expensive method of corrupting the morals, and seducing the affections of the people.

However, it was sufficient for the Apostle's purpose, if, by alluding to the *manner* in which these games were exhibited, he could lead the attention of his Christian converts to more useful

useful and important trials of *their* virtue. They had often seen and applauded the vigour and activity that the wrestlers and others were wont to exert in striving for the mastery—they knew also by what strictness of discipline they prepared for these contests—that they were *temperate in all things*; submitting to a long course of abstinence and self-denial, only to obtain a fading or *corruptible crown* of laurel, or pine, or bay leaves. St. Paul therefore might justly argue from the conduct observed in this case, to that which was equally necessary to finish the Christian course with glory.—*Know ye not, says he, that they who run in a race, run all; and yet one only obtaineth the prize:* Exert the same spirit and activity, the same diligence and perseverance to merit the rewards which your religion holds out to you, and *all* will obtain a prize. Ye see likewise, that *they, who strive for the mastery, in any contest, are temperate in all things*—experience and nature direct them to the proper means of attaining their end. Now they do it,—they practise these means, to obtain a *corruptible crown*; but we an *incorruptible*.

Such is the Apostle's argument; and as it includes both the natural and religious motives to right conduct, I shall take occasion to consider how greatly it imports us, both as men and christians, to be continually advancing in a course of virtuous endeavours, with a view to exalt our nature to that perfection and happiness which it is capable of attaining.

And first, in regard to the natural motives to human virtue, they not only occur from a consciousness of our own powers and capacities, and the advantages that result from a proper use of them; but from our reflections on the established order and constitution of things. As the all-wise Creator hath appointed every species of beings its respective part in the general system; so the very lowest have such a part assigned them, as may answer the end of their creation: and the higher they rise in the scale, the more enlarged are their instincts or powers of action; and all invariably exerted in pursuit of their proper views and attainments. Thus, in some of the animal kind we may observe such a spirit of emulation as if *they* were striving for the mastery — in others an amazing foresight of their common

common wants, and an unwearyed diligence in providing for them.

I mention this only to shew, that the part which even the most insignificant creatures are naturally disposed to take, should lead us to reflect on *our* superior obligations: and to these the wise man sends us to be instructed with much propriety of advice, though in a very humiliating comparison:—*Go to the ant, thou sluggard, says he, consider her ways, and be wise: which having no guide, overseer, nor ruler, provideth her meat in the summer, and gathereth her stores in the harvest*\*.

Now as wisdom and goodness are every where discernible in the works of God, (for he hath made nothing in vain) we must conclude it to be in the divine intention that the parts to be performed by the several orders of beings should be answerable to the respective powers and capacities wherewith he hath endowed them: and consequently that every man, considered as a rational and moral agent, is bound to act agreeably to that intention;

\* Prov. vi. 6, 7, 8.

by applying the superior powers of *his* nature to the pursuit of whatever good he is capable of attaining both for himself and others.— If we esteem it a glorious pre-eminence, as we certainly ought, to be the only rational creatures here below: to be so wonderfully made as to *increase in wisdom, as we grow in stature*; and, by a right application, to make a progressive improvement both in strength and virtue—if to be able to adapt our actions to the occasion, and with all this to have our intellectual and animal powers so happily connected, that whatever the one designs, the other is fitted to execute—if these and many other endowments distinguish and adorn humanity, what are we to consider them but as so many strong incitements to virtuous emulation? as the natural means with which our gracious Creator hath furnished us of acquitting ourselves with honour and integrity in those stations to which his providence hath appointed us?—Even the sensitive part of our nature, our appetites, our passions, and affections, are all of them instrumental in stirring us up to action—are all intended to quicken our pursuit of manly and becoming attainments. We are naturally struck with the

the useful and commendable actions of men like ourselves—we admire and extol works of art, of genius, of literature—we applaud, we reward the pains and diligence of others in their several occupations, from the patient industry of the man who *goeth forth to his work and to his labour until the evening*, up to those renowned guardians of human happiness who have generously exposed themselves to *the heat and burthen*, to the toil and danger, of many a great and glorious *day*. And must not every man in his own order feel the force of that particular example which the bent of his genius inclines him to imitate? Will he not likewise observe, as he cannot but observe, that either reputation, or wealth, or power; perhaps all of them together, are the almost certain rewards of human excellence in others? and may not these be applied as additional incentives to his own endeavours?—By every virtuous mind they *will* be, they *have been* so applied.—Hence the numberless blessings and advantages that have gradually accrued to mankind from the earliest ages, to the present times. Hence, from a state of rude and savage manners, many nations (and our own among the rest,) have been civilized and polished,

by

by the wise institutions of law-givers—by prudent methods of education—by the invention of useful arts—by enlarging the paths of science—by extending the bounds of commerce, and opening a social intercourse between the most remote inhabitants of the earth: advantages, which at one time or other, have all sprung from that spirit of emulation, that laudable ambition, which a gracious providence hath implanted in the mind of man; and which are as necessary to give perfection to the works of the *mechanic*, as to crown the most arduous undertakings of the *mighty* with glory and success.

We see then, even from this confined view, that some motives to engage us in a course of virtuous endeavours are laid in the very frame and constitution of our nature: that others arise from the force of example; and all are strengthened by the natural sensibility of our passions and affections. To touch these delicate springs in a proper manner, is to give all our other powers a right direction.—The desire of attaining any real or supposed advantage; the pursuit of pleasure, the removal of pain, the unexpected incidents, the interesting

ing events by which our own or the public welfare may be materially affected, have sometimes awakened the most supinely indolent to a spirited exertion of all their powers and abilities. For even in common cases, self and social happiness are oft-times the same, but in extraordinary cases they cannot be otherwise. And therefore it is wisely ordered, as a strong incitement to *quit ourselves like men*, that every action should reflect an honour upon ourselves in proportion to the good which it doth to others: and that nothing should so effectually advance the credit and happiness of *individuals*, as what at the same time promotes, or was intended to promote, the *public utility*. What an ample provision is this of the gracious author of our nature for raising in us a laudable ambition to *strive for the mastery*, or to perform the part well, whatever it be, to which we are appointed!—especially as the true estimate of human merit is not to be taken from the height or eminence of station, but from the faithful execution of the duties annexed to it. For whether the rank we are placed in be high or low; whether it be to design or to execute; to command or to obey; whatever difference there may be in point of

desig-

designation, the obligation to answer the end proposed is still the same. Every degree of ability is comparatively important to the common happiness.—*The eye cannot say to the hand I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you* \*.

From this various, but equal, exertion of the human powers; from emulation without envy, and competition without strife, results the dignity and credit of individuals; as also the stability, good order, and prosperity of those communities to which they belong. And if it were not presumption to compare them, one might say, that a diligent and honest discharge of duty is to society, what the constant and regular motion of the heavenly bodies is to nature. But it is too visible that the effects are different. The beneficial influence and harmony of the one, being directed by the infinite wisdom and goodness of God; whereas the selfishness, the depravity, and licentious folly of man, are incessantly obstructing the peace and tranquillity of the other.

\* 1 Cor. xiii. 21.

Such,

Such, however, is the established order of things, that human happiness, whether it regards individuals or societies, will generally be in proportion to human virtue, or a strict attention to the duties of our respective stations. Without this the finest abilities will be useless, if not pernicious: and with it, the slenderest parts cannot be unprofitable.—How then are the powers of our nature to be kept in a fit posture of activity; in a constant readiness to be exerted according to the various, and perhaps difficult conjunctures that may arise?—The Apostle informs us what method *they* took who *strove for the mastery* at the public games—*they were temperate in all things*—abstained from every voluptuous indulgence that might either debilitate their strength, or render them inert and sluggish in applying it. And can there be a more effectual method of attaining any other desirable end?—one more likely to give our several faculties their full play? or that will better enable us to perform the duties of life with an active and becoming spirit?—Surely, they whose health is owing to temperance, and whose activity proceeds from both: whose passions are cool, and whose faculties are clear and

and undisturbed, will bid fairer to strive successfully, than they whose force is enfeebled by intemperance; whose reason is often stupefied by excess, and seldom able to resist the attacks of temptation. In vain will they attempt to *wrestle* for the *prize*, or to get forward in the *race* of virtue, who are ever stooping to gather up the gilded baits of pleasure thrown in their way! You may *endeavour* to engage the indolent and voluptuous in some commendable and useful occupation; you may bid them labour up the rough and arduous path of glory; but their feeble powers are unequal to the work: their strength lies only in their appetites; and, like the slothful Israelites, they are no sooner delivered from *the land of bondage* than they want to be conducted back to it: because *there they had flesh to the full*; and because their liberty, the gift of God himself, was attended with a little toil and hunger in *the wilderness*.

If, then, we regard the true dignity of our nature, and would not impair those noble faculties that God has given us to support it, we must be *temperate*. Nay, if we would practise this virtue in its full extent, so as to keep

keep our body under, and to bring it into subjection, we must be *temperate in all things*: in our passions and affections; our partialities and resentments—not pursuing the riches or honours of the world, to gratify our avarice, ambition, or extravagant dissipation: but in all our competitions; and, even when we strive for the mastery in any point, to remember the condition prescribed by the Apostle, that we are not to be crowned except we strive lawfully.

And now, having hitherto rested the obligation to a course of virtuous activity, as we are men, on the foot of natural motives; it remains only that we strengthen those motives as christians by the superior efficacy of religious considerations: that whilst we look on things temporal, we may not lose sight of the things eternal.

Here then we find the *directions of revelation* lending their friendly aid to the *dictates of reason*; supporting them where weak, and supplying them where defective. For, it cannot be said that religion deviates from the plan of nature because it corrects and improves it.

it. The same rules of right conduct are common to both.—They both direct us to pursue *whatsoever things are honest, and lovely, and of good report* \*. The one excites us to *strive for the mastery*, that we may *obtain a corruptible crown* with the *applause of men*: The other leads us on from that acquisition, to aspire after an *incorruptible crown* as the *reward of God*.—That instructs us to be *temperate, sober, and diligent* for the sake of our present happiness: *This* extends their good effects to the whole of our existence: and whilst *nature* derives the obligations to virtue from its own dignity, *religion* founds them upon the will of God; and transfers the honors and applause that have been the just reward of unwearied efforts in this life, to that *eternal weight of glory*, which will be dispensed hereafter.

From these united considerations, the motives to an active and diligent discharge of our several duties, both as men and christians, appear in so strong a light, that, unless the mind be totally immersed in sloth and intem-

\* Philip. iv. 8.

perance,

perance, they must, some time or other, direct it to its truest interests. If, as men, we are naturally prompted by a sense of reputation, or profit, or social affection to acquit ourselves well: as christians, we are taught that the very spirit of our religion consists in doing good, even for the sake of doing it: forbidding us to be lovers of ourselves only, but to bear *one another's burthens*; to be ready to give, and glad to distribute: inspiring us with a noble disinterestedness in regard to worldly acquisitions; which, *while some have too eagerly coveted, they have pierced themselves through with many sorrows*. For, in all these pursuits, how often do we run after an empty shadow, and disquiet ourselves in vain! Is the race always to the swift, or the battle to the strong, or riches to men of understanding? Of the numberless competitors for the honors and emoluments of life can *all* expect to be gratified? Nevertheless we still continue to pursue them: we even flatter ourselves they are within our reach: when some other hand bears away the prize we had so strenuously contended for, and leaves all our endeavours unapplauded or unrewarded. But in our spiritual race it is not so. In that all may obtain a

prize. And what consolation, what support at the close of life can they have who *have toiled all the day long and taken nothing*, equal to that best and only refuge which our religion offers to the mind under all its pressures —the sure and stedfast hope of a glorious immortality? There we shall receive that incorruptible crown which will amply reward our most virtuous efforts here below! happy in the mean time, that the sincerity of our endeavours is not left to be estimated by human judgment, nor their rewards to depend on the uncertainty of human events!

## SERMON VII.

THE DUTY OF LIVING PEACEABLY WITH  
ALL MEN.

ROM. xii. 18.

*If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live  
peaceably with all men.*

THE mild benevolent spirit of the christian religion hath so natural a tendency to promote the peace, the good order, and social happiness of mankind; that how much soever its enemies endeavour to weaken the divine authority of those precepts which they are averse to practise; every sober and candid enquirer will readily admit, even on this single view of it,—that a religion which breathes the most humane and benevolent sentiments; which aims to root out every

H 2                      perverse

perverse unsocial disposition, and to produce a most heavenly frame and temper of mind in its professors, must itself be of heavenly original, and proceed from an infinitely wise and good Being, who delights in the happiness of all his creatures.

We know, indeed, that some religions *have been* founded on mere pretended revelations—we *still* see that of the bold impostor Mahomet, for some wise ends of Providence, permitted to prevail over a considerable part of the earth: but the spirit of it, instead of advancing the happiness and tranquillity of the world, carried havock and desolation in its progress; and appears to be the genuine production of that wisdom which is *earthly, sensual, devilish* \*. Whereas the principles of our holy faith bear all the internal characters of the *wisdom which is from above*—are in their nature *pure and peaceable*; and in their effects *full of mercy and good works*. They were not obtruded upon the world by violence, or embraced from views of temporal interest:—were not published in *thunderings and earth-*

\* James iii. 15.

*quakes,*

quakes, and all the terrors of omnipotence; but in a declaration accompanied with the melodious voice of *angels*—as if to harmonize the discordant affections of mankind, and to inspire them with the same *peace and good-will* to each other, which our Saviour was empowered to offer them on the part of *God*. And hence this divine person is, among other designations, very properly styled the *Mediator of a better covenant*, and the *Prince of Peace*. Invested with this divine character, he came to reconcile us to *God*, and to one another: to invite us to happiness by all the motives of *glory and virtue*; and to strengthen the ties of every moral and social duty, by an infallible assurance, that *those wicked servants*, who should *smite their fellow-servants*, or disturb the peace and harmony of society, should *have their portion with unbelievers*, in that future state of existence, *where shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth* \*.

Such were the principles, and such the sanctions on which the great *author of our faith* enforced the obligations of social virtue.

\* Matt. xxiv. 56.

Nor was his labour of love less industriously carried on by his successors the *Apostles*.—As the doctrine they were sent to explain, was that of grace, or favour, which *concerned the common salvation*; so the precepts they subjoined to it, were principally directed to promote the common interests, of *all men*:—and this in order to unite, what in their own nature must ever be inseparable, the duties of a sincere christian, with those of a good citizen.

In proof of this observation, we need only have recourse to the conclusion of this single epistle, from whence the text is taken. We may there observe, how earnestly we are entreated to maintain the spiritual union that results from our mutual relation as christians—how warmly we are pressed to be *kindly affectioned one to another* as men—how strongly also we are enjoined to *be subject to the higher powers* as fellow-citizens:—*to be subject*, not from a motive of fear only; or because rulers are a terror to *evil works*; but from the nobler motive of *conscience*; and because they are the *ministers of God to us for good*. And to impress the greater force on these several obligations,

tions, the apostle deduces them all, whether they relate to our religious, our moral, or social conduct, from that *good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God*, which both reason and revelation teach us to consider, as the only sure foundation of every duty.

It seemed necessary to premise thus much, in order to shew, that *one* great end of our religion was to advance the social happiness of all men; and as the text points out the most probable means of attaining this end, by *living peaceably with all men*, I shall now beg leave briefly to consider the nature and extent of this duty, together with the motives that recommend it to our observance,

As to the first, the difficulty does not lie in comprehending what is meant by *living peaceably*, but in disposing the minds of men to such a temper, and forming their conduct on such principles as may facilitate the practice of it both in private and in public life. There are few who want to be told, that the great ends of society, are the welfare, and safety, and protection, both of individuals and the community.—They rather want to

be reminded that these ends cannot otherwise be secured, than by peace and union among ourselves.—That our passions are the chief disturbers of our peace; and our pride, ambition, and selfishness, the principal causes of civil discord—that, therefore, a prudent restraint of our selfish appetites, a modest opinion of our own merits, and a candid judgment of others, are duties not only of moral but religious obligation.—That even a patient and forbearing temper is a necessary part of social virtue. Hence the moralist advises to *bear and forbear*—and the apostle, to be *patient towards all men*. A good man, we know, will *bear much* to prevent contention; as well as *do much* to preserve peace; and, while the storm is abroad, will hold it more prudent to retire from, than oppose it: because till that is blown over, the still voice of peace, from a private person, will either not be heard, or not regarded. We must not, however, confound this *patient merit* with that indolent tranquillity of mind which may naturally dispose some men to be quiet in themselves, and inoffensive to those about them.—The result of such a temper may be personal happiness, but it is not *virtue*.—For the

the practice of this and every social duty, is only so far virtuous, as it proceeds from a *moral* intention to contribute to the ease and happiness of others; not from a *natural fitness* of disposition to enjoy it in our own breasts. And therefore we cannot be said to *live peaceably*, in the active and practical sense of the expression, except as our religion directs us, we *study* to be *quiet*: and not only to be *quiet*, but to *do our own business* \*. —A diligent attention to the business of our respective stations being to society, what the regular and orderly course of the heavenly bodies is to nature. We are likewise further directed to *follow after the things that make for peace*; and *things whereby we may edify*, and excite one another to carry on the good work of religious and civil union with a view to the *general benefit*: so that by a reciprocation of kind offices, and by mutual concessions in points of indifferent obligation, we may secure a concurrence of opinion in those that are essential. Nay, even the lesser virtues of chearfulness, civility, courteousness, and respectful attentions, enter all into the

\* 1 Thess. iy. 11.

*idea,*

*idea*, and are of no small service towards a right *discharge* of this duty. They form as it were the *outposts* to the main body of society ; are a *check* upon the petulant attacks of obstinacy or ill-humour ; give time for the succours of reason to come in ; and preserve the communication between the several ranks and orders of men free and open.

It is easy to conceive how many little disasters and animosities would be prevented by holding such a conduct as this, even in the ordinary *intercourses* of private life.—Thus when we behold the serenity and chearfulness that appear in a well ordered family ; the complacency and delight that spring from domestic concord ; and the friendly exchanges of civility that are kept up between one neighbour and another ; we cannot but acknowledge *how good and joyful a thing it is for brethren to dwell together in unity* \* !—In these smaller subdivisions of society, we clearly perceive the *nature* of this duty from the *effects* of it.—But when the circle of obligation widens, and the good order and happiness of

\* Psalm cxxxiii, 1.

the

the whole community becomes the object of consideration, it is then that a disposition to secure *these* important interests enlarges the sphere of its activity, both according to the conjuncture that calls for it, and the power and influence that each individual may be possessed of. On such occasions a regard to the public safety, and a sense of our common happiness, should render us attentive to the very beginnings of strife—should not only dispose us, after the example of the holy Psalmist, to *pray for the peace of our Jerusalem, but for our brethren and companions sake*, to promote its prosperity; yea, because of the house of the Lord our God to seek to do it good \*.

Hence then it appears, that there is a natural and strict affinity between the religious and social principle; — that the works of righteousness must be peace; and the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance + from all apprehension of civil discord.—On the other hand, whenever we neglect to cultivate a sense of social duty, and suffer the seeds of strife and contention to grow up among us,

\* Psalm cxxii. 9.

+ Isaiah xxxii. 17.

must

must we not, for the time at least, be governed by very different principles from those of religion?—The truth is, there is the same mixture of imperfection in our social as in our moral nature: and it would be well if men were candid enough (and the better they are, the more candid they will be), to make due allowances for the little wrongnesses of both. In proceeding therefore to state the extent of this duty, we must take our estimate from the temper and disposition of mankind in general; not from the particular virtues or imperfections of individuals. And in this light our apostle himself seems to have considered it. He does not, as in other points of duty, enjoin us *absolutely*, and without any reserve; but, if *it be possible*, and *as much as lieth in you*, *live peaceably with all men*.

What conduct then are *we* to hold, and by what rule shall we measure the *degrees* of possibility? As there is a *mutual* obligation implied in the very nature of this duty, what will it avail us that *we* are ever ready to make all reasonable advances to peace and amity, if our adversary persists in rejecting them, and will make no sort of advances on his part?—

Can

Can we pretend to govern the temper and disposition of other men? can we *compel* them to be *just, and gentle, and easy to be intreated?*—can we always prevent the jealousies or remove the prejudices, or efface the wrong impressions they may have received of us?—And is religion so hard a task-master as to expect we should be accountable for other mens failures? or, that we should be entirely passive under all kinds of injurious treatment?—Certainly not.—Our reputation, our property, and personal safety, the most valuable blessings of this life, are not now exposed, as those of the first Christians were, to the spiteful calumny, and oppressive violence of every bold invader; but are happily secured to us, as far as just laws, and equal government can secure them: so that *to him who smiteth us on the one cheek*, we are not now obliged to *turn the other also*. But, in regard to less material causes of contention, which, from small beginnings, are often found to make the widest breaches, the wise son of Sirach points out an easy and proper method of putting a stop to them. *Admonish a friend*, says he, *it may be he hath not done it: and if he have, that he do it no more: admonish thy* *neigh-*

*neighbour, it may be he hath not said it; and if he have, that he speak it not again. For, as he adds, there is who slippeth in his speech, but not from his heart \**, and where is the man that hath not offended with his tongue?

We see then that before either of the parties can fairly acquit himself, or determine whether it be possible to live peaceably, he must first have tried every thing in his power, and done as much as lieth in him, both to promote peace, and to prevent contention—for contention prevented, is just so much peace secured to society. And where now is the hard duty and service which *religion* expects from us?—Only that we should use all the means in our power to attain what is of the utmost importance to private and public happiness.—But can we say it is *not* in our power to be fair and honest in our dealings—sincere in our professions—moderate in our resentments—and temperate in our enjoyments?—Is it not in our power to propose our opinions with modesty—to found our assertions on truth—to restrain our curiosity by

\* Eccles. xix. 14.

discre-

discretion—and to treat the characters of men, their principles and connexions, with the same tenderness and candor, as we are desirous that others should treat our own?—Is it not in our power as Christians, though of various denominations, to *keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace?* and, as fellow-citizens, to discourage those nominal distinctions that are only set up in order to divide us?

Can we not forbear going about as tale-bearers *among the people, speaking evil of dignities, and of the things we understand not;*—infusing fears and jealousies *where no fear was,* and enflaming the minds of the ignorant and needy to all kinds of mischief? And if these several means of *living peaceably with all men* be in our power—if government was instituted for the sake of *preserving peace*—if religion expects that we should endeavour, *as much as lieth in us, to promote peace;*—and the obligation to promote it is bound upon us by the most sacred engagements,—by the united sanctions of both religion and government—it will follow that in proportion as we honestly apply these means, in the same proportion

portion shall we secure the great ends of social union, and approve ourselves good Christians, good citizens, and good men.

When the philosopher of old was asked under which of the free states of Greece he would choose to live; his answer was, *under that which is most orderly*—thereby intimating, that freedom and liberty are then only the most desirable of earthly blessings, while they are guarded from licentiousness,—are enjoyed in peace, and are productive of civil concord. Hence the *political*, like the *natural*, body is enabled to perform its proper functions, when the several members act agreeably to their different, but combined, powers; and, as the apostle observes, *are so tempered together*, as to *have the same care one of another* \*: thereby producing that full exertion of national strength, of legislative wisdom, and public credit, which in the natural course of things must increase the glory, and extend the influence, of any people.

And now, after what has been said, to enlarge upon the motives and advantages that

\* 1 Cor. xii. 24.

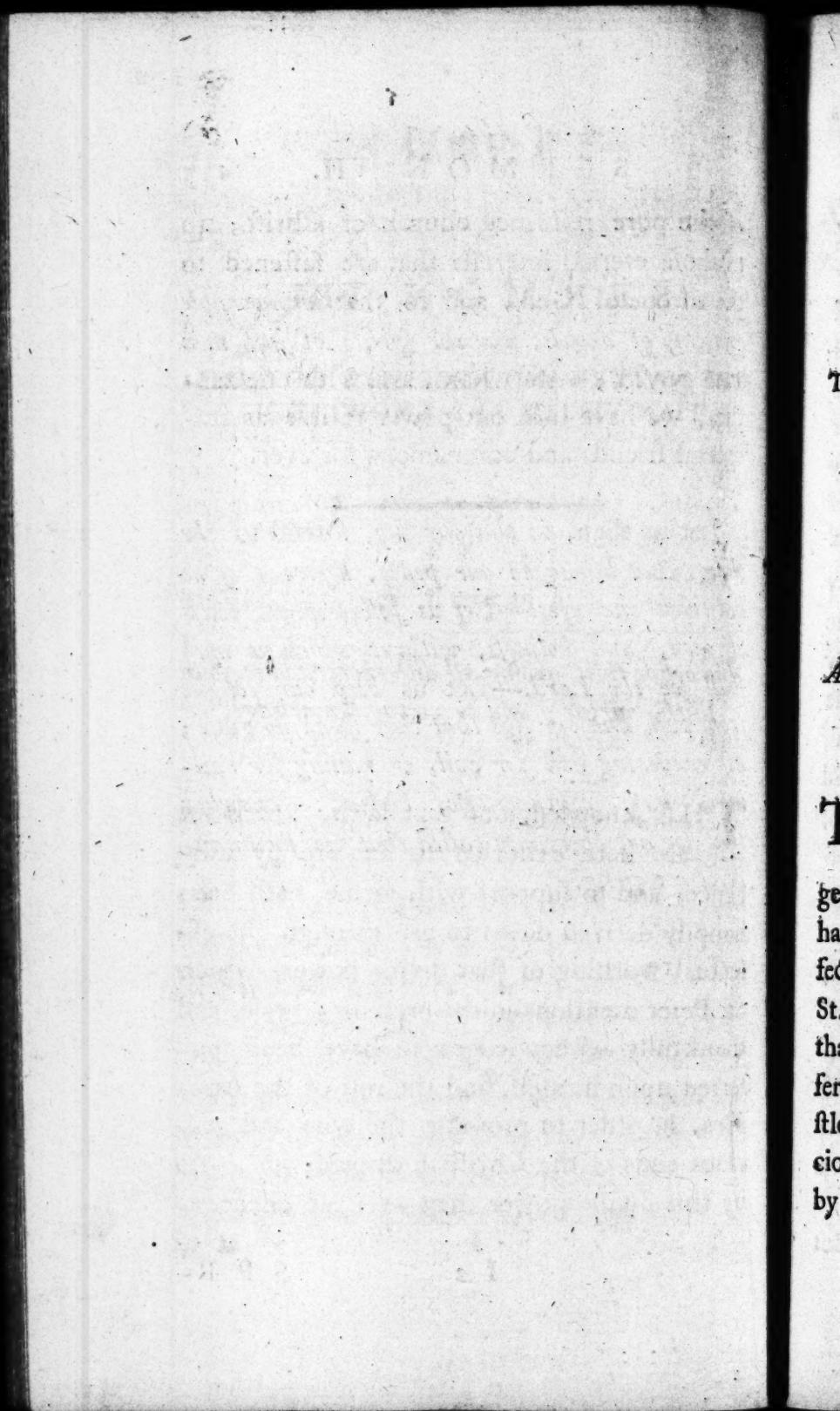
recommend the practice of this duty even in private life, would only be to describe, what every virtuous mind will much better conceive from a conscious sense of its own benevolent and peaceable disposition. Or if we consider its influence on public happiness, can the imagination form a more pleasing picture, than to trace out this amiable disposition, as *going about*, like its divine exemplar, *continually doing good*?—the gentle virtues of prudence, moderation, sincerity, and contentment, attending in its train—the kindred flames of loyalty, and love of country glowing in its bosom—ever attentive to seize every favourable conjuncture to conciliate the affections, to soften the resentments, to remove the prejudices, and adjust the pretensions, of contending parties—holding out to them the inestimable benefits of pure religion, of equal government, of generous liberty, of national glory, and unbounded commerce—and presenting them all as the genuine offspring of peace and union. These surely are blessings which every wise and good man would wish not only to enjoy, but to perpetuate. They are blessings that result from the peculiar excellencies of our constitution,

tution, nor can we set too high a value upon them: but to enjoy them *safely*, we must enjoy them *peaceably*. With this view, it is wisely appointed, that there should be a natural coincidence between duty and happiness; and, as the practice of duty is happiness in any instance, it is particularly so in this; since whatever we contribute to the good order and harmony of society will, in the event, revert back upon ourselves, and enhance the value of every thing that is dear to us, by the security and protection we receive for the enjoyment of them.

In a word, a fixed and habitual disposition to *live peaceably*, and to promote peace; whether its object be the happiness of domestic concord, the satisfaction arising from friendly intercourses, or the preservation of religious and civil union—as it gives us the noblest idea we can frame of human excellence, so the Christian religion not only strengthens these several obligations, but offers the most exalted motives to comply with them:—conducting us along the chain of temporal interests, by which we are here united as fellow-creatures, fellow-citizens, and members of

of the pure reformed church of Christ; up to those eternal interests that are fastened to the throne of God; and to that *innumerable company of angels, and the spirits of just men made perfect*; with whom, and with one another, we have it in our power to live as immortal friends and companions for ever.

Let us then, *in this our day*, attend to the things that belong to our peace, before they be bid from our eyes.—Let us follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.—Let us keep our tongue from evil, and our lips that they speak no guile; not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing; but, contrariwise, blessing:—knowing that we are thereunto called that we should inherit a blessing.



## SERMON VIII.

THE NATURE AND NECESSITY OF CHRISTIAN VIRTUE AND KNOWLEDGE.

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2 PETER i. 5.

*And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith, virtue; and to virtue, knowledge.*

THE knowledge of that faith, which we are here exhorted to acquire by diligence, and to support with virtue, hath been happily derived down to us, through the effectual-working of that divine power, which St. Peter mentions in the preceding verse; and thankfully acknowledges to have been conferred upon himself, and the rest of the Apostles, in order to promote the wise and gracious ends of the Christian dispensation.—As by this divine power they were at once en-

abled to preach the gospel in languages, which till then they did not understand, and to work miracles in confirmation of *what* they taught; so they were likewise endowed with every internal aid and support that was necessary to fortify their minds against the persecution they had to expect;—to clear their understanding from the prejudices they had conceived, and to give them a full and distinct perception, as well of the fundamental articles of the Christian faith, which they were expressly chosen to attest, as of the pure and reasonable service they were every where to establish. Thus enlightened by the spirit, and supported by the power of God, they not only spread the revelation of his will through all nations beginning at Jerusalem, but drew up a faithful record of it for the benefit and instruction of all ages to the end of time. And hence the scriptures of the New Testament are by St. John emphatically styled the *Everlasting Gospel*: the truths contained, and the gracious conditions of happiness proposed in it constituting that unchangeable rule of faith and practice, which, like the eternal spirit who first inspired it, continues to be *the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.*

But

But although the *rule* of our faith be the same that was at first delivered to the saints, the evidence on which it now resteth, is materially different. In those days, men of candid dispositions could no more withstand the convincing powers wherewith the apostles and first teachers of christianity were endowed,—*the demonstration of the spirit*, as St. Paul stiles it, than they could the evidence of their own senses. They *heard*, they *saw*, and they *believed*. Unbiassed reason told them, that those persons *must* be teachers sent from God, who could speak in languages which they never learnt; and who did such miracles as *no man could do except God were with them*. Whereas the present professors of our holy religion, at least the sober and reasonable part of them, lay no claim to any miraculous powers,—boast of no extraordinary gifts,—of no internal feelings—of no sensible experiences of the spirit. Content with the ordinary means of grace, and *commending the truth to every man's conscience in the sight of God* \*, they can offer a much fairer evidence—can appeal to the sure word

\* 2 Cor. iv. 2

of prophecy contained in the gospel; to the full completion of some of its predictions, and the gradual unfolding of others:—to its legal establishment, and providential support in every kingdom and country where true wisdom, and science, and the *useful* arts of life are cultivated: and, to what every man's reason and judgment may decide upon, that internal evidence which results from the purity of its precepts, and their natural tendency to raise and exalt our nature to its supreme good, by learning how to escape *the corruption that is in the world through lust* \*.

But lest this precious faith, and the promises contained in it, by which our apostle tells us, we might even *become partakers of the divine nature*, should be rendered of none effect, it will greatly concern you, my brethren, to observe the directions in the text—to *give all diligence, that you may add to your faith, virtue*—employ the powers of your reason to the noblest purpose, that of acquiring a due conviction of the truth of your religion;—and support the acquisition with a

\* 2 Peter i. 4.

firmness

firmness and fortitude of mind suitable to its dignity and importance. So will your diligence procure you the proper knowledge of your faith; and your virtue defeat every attempt to seduce you from it.

Now whether we consider the term *faith* as implying a rational conviction of the being and perfections of God, which is the ground and foundation of all religion; or, what is here more especially meant by it, an entire assent of the mind to the great principles of christianity as revealed to us in the gospel:—in either of these acceptations, our *faith* will be imperfect without *diligence*; unfixed and wavering without *virtue*. For it is by a due application of our rational powers, assisted by divine grace, that we not only discover the evidence for the truth of our religion, but the obligation we are under of acting agreeably to the conviction arising from it. We *may* know the truth, and we *must* know it before we can practise it; but the means of knowing it depend upon our diligence; upon that proper use and exertion of human abilities, which will always promote their improvements.—For, if there be a spirit in man,

man, and if the breath of the Almighty hath given him understanding, can he possibly apply it to nobler purposes than to explore the nature, the dependence, and duration of his being? What are the ends and uses of that moral sense he feels himself endowed with? whether the perversion of it doth not constitute guilt? how such guilt is to be expiated, how to be punished?—but in the progress of this enquiry, though natural reason might discover, and certainly did discover, many important duties of social life; it could not sufficiently enforce them: though it might open some imperfect views into a future life, yet clouds and thick darkness were round about it. There were still wanting the sanctions of a divine law for a fit obligation to virtue; the clear light of revelation for an infallible rule of faith. And hath not the wise and merciful Creator supplied these wants? for the *Grace of God, which bringeth salvation unto all men, hath been so fully manifested, that as it teacheth us to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world\**, which is a conduct that must

\* Titus ii. 12.

approve

approve itself to every reasonable being, so hath it given us an assured hope, through the resurrection of Christ from the dead, of that incorruptible inheritance which is reserved for us in heaven.

But still, though revelation hath graciously supplied the *defects*, it doth not supersede the *use*, of reason. So far otherwise that they mutually illustrate and recommend each other: herein resembling those *jewels of great price*, which can only be polished to their greatest lustre by materials of the same kind. And indeed revelation considered as a rule of conduct, is reason itself; but exalted and refined to its greatest purity: according to St. Paul, it is the wisdom of God, or right reason proceeding from the divine mind, and yet condescending to appeal to man for a testimony of its excellence and perfection. For *why*, says our Saviour, *even of yourselves judge ye not what is right* \*? *And if I say the truth, why do ye not believe me* †?—Such was the regard expressed for our intelligent nature by the great teacher sent from God, that he con-

\* Luke xii. 57.

† John viii. 46.

stantly

stantly referred whatever he *said*, and whatever he *did*, to the impartial judgment and examination of mankind. And did not his apostles, when instructed by the holy Jesus, to preach Christ, the *power of God*, and an object of faith, to both Jews and Gentiles, hold the same open and generous conduct? Do they not freely admit that their hearers had a right to insist upon evidence for the divine authority of their commission? And even when they had given the clearest evidence of it, by signs and wonders, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, they still exhort them to consider what they say—to be fully persuaded in their own minds—to *prove all things* and to *hold fast that which is good*\*. For that they had no dominion over their faith, but left them to believe and act upon principle and conviction; as what would enable them to give an answer to every one that asked them a reason for the hope that was in them†. But to what purpose are men endowed with fit capacities for sacred knowledge, or why do the inspired writers defer so much to human judgment, if we give no diligence to culti-

\* 1 Thess. v. 21.

† 1 Peter iii. 15.

vate and improve it? especially where all the means of religious knowledge are free and open? It hath long been the happiness of these kingdoms that the scriptures are in every one's hands, that we all hear them *speak in our own tongue*, and *declare the wonderful works of God*. Happy indeed, if we peruse them with *diligence*, and obey them with *sincerity*; neither offended when we find *some things hard to be understood*, nor discouraged because our present capacities cannot comprehend all things. If some objects of our faith be now seen through a glass darkly, still the rule of practice, by which we are to prove our faith, is so plain, that he who *runs may read it*. And yet, to examine revelation in both these views, we must have what our Saviour calls a *single eye, and a good heart*. A bad man cannot clearly discern the beauty of holiness; his moral sight is vitiated, and he sees spots in the purest whiteness. People of this distorted cast will take up their notions of religion from those who view it through a dull and impure medium—not by *coming to the light, left their deeds should be reproved*: but by casting a shade over those truths whose splendor would otherwise be too painful to them.—

Hence

Hence it should seem, that among all the methods artful men have used to depreciate the sacred writings, in order to serve the cause of infidelity, they have ever avoided the recommending an accurate and diligent perusal of them: being aware that the more critically they are examined, the better they would be understood; and, being left to speak their own genuine sense, would display all the force of their internal evidence. To render their attacks, as they vainly imagined, more successful, they have used their utmost efforts to turn the mysteries of christianity into ridicule, in order to treat its precepts with neglect. But after all, these men have undesignedly done a real *service* to our holy religion in professing themselves its *enemies*. For, beside verifying the predictions of our Apostle, that *there must be heresies*, and that *there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts*\*; they have raised such a generous emulation among the wise and good of all orders among us, to contend earnestly for the *faith*, and to furnish the world with such rational and convincing

\* 2 Pet. iii. 3.

arguments in defence of it, as neither the wit nor malice of its adversaries will ever be able to refute. And possibly the providence of God may have permitted the severest attacks to be made on Christianity in our times, for the same wise ends that he permitted the sharpest persecutions to fall on the first professors of it; that the stedfastness of the one might be tried by their sufferings, and the truth of the other be more illustrated by debate.

This however is certain, that except our sense of religion be founded upon conviction, according to the abilities and opportunities we are severally possessed of, it will either be a mere nominal religion, resting only upon external forms and ceremonies, or be such as the contagion of enthusiasm, or the arts of superstition, may chance to make it. Whereas, if our faith be the result of sober enquiry, and a proper attention to the evidence on which it rests, and that is on the foundation of Prophets and Apostles, Christ himself being the chief corner-stone—the whole building will then be fitly framed together, and increase unto an holy temple in the Lord \*.

\* Ephes. ii. 20.

Here then let us raise the structure of our faith, where reason discovers the firmest ground-work of our happiness ; and that it may not be shaken by the violence of our passions, or undermined by the *cunning craf-*  
*tiness of them who lie in wait to deceive*, we must be careful to strengthen and fortify our religious principles, by *adding to our faith, virtue*.—By which we are not to understand, the various moral qualities, that are often included in the general idea of virtue ; and which the Apostle in the following verses ranges in their proper order as the necessary *graces*, rather than the *guard and security* of religion. Virtue is here confined to a closer sense ; and imports that rational and manly quality of the soul which we commonly express by *fortitude* or courage ; that sustaining and, resisting power, which, with the ordinary means of grace that will ever be vouchsafed to our prayers, will support us in all trials, and carry us through all temptations.

There was indeed a time when a *more* than ordinary portion of fortitude and stedfastness was necessary to support that faith which all the powers of this world were combined to  
destroy ;

destroy; and even later ages have beheld many illustrious proofs of religious virtue, made perfect through suffering. But, because we are secure, and unmolested, in the profession of our faith, have we therefore no need of this virtue to preserve the vital spirit of it?—Are there none other methods of putting it to the trial, but those of persecution? None to be found in the weakness and corruption of our nature; none in the contagion of profligate example and the dangerous tendency of the public manners?—Do the disguised emissaries of superstition find it in vain to practise the disingenuous arts of seduction?—or the more open advocates of infidelity, to weaken the ties of religious obligation?—Surely, every one must be conscious of these trials, who attends to what passes within himself, or, to what happens in the world about him. *Virtue* therefore, or *fortitude*, or *steadfastness*, is wisely made a part of Christian morality, both to guard the weak side of our nature from surprize, and to restore it to a proper posture of defence against any subsequent attack. For frailty is natural to the present frame and constitution of our being. We all experience the force of our

passions,—that *law in our members, which warreth against the law in our minds*: and how unequal would be the combat, if, beside the aid we draw from reason, we did not implore that *help which cometh from above!* If, indeed, our nature had been so constituted, that our passions should always obey the dictates of right reason, there would then be no such thing as frailty. But this is far from being the case. It is by the free and voluntary use of the different powers of reason and appetite, that the allwise Creator thought fit to try the virtue and integrity of all accountable beings. The *crown of glory, the prize of our high calling, laid up for us in a better world, must be contended for in this.* To be entitled to it, we must *fight the good fight of faith—must run the race of virtue that is set before us, and so run that we may obtain.* But, if we suffer present enjoyment to divert us in our progress to future felicity, will it avail to say, that this world is full of allurements, and hath its splendid trifles to throw in our way, whilst every possible circumstance of trial hath a suitable direction provided for it?—Our religion, indeed, was graciously intended to *guide us with its counsel, and after follow-*

following it, to receive us into glory. But though it invites us to happiness—though, as our Apostle observes, it hath given us *exceeding great and precious promises*—Promises of divine assistance to our endeavours; of intercession for our infirmities; and pardon on our repentance; yet it doth not compel us to be happy; doth not put us into an *unfinning* state, nor *over-rule* the freedom of the will, but only *regulates* and *directs* it. And this would certainly be sufficient for all the purposes of life and godliness—sufficient to produce a competent *dégrée* of order and happiness, both private and public; both temporal and eternal, did men but diligently advert to the directions of religion, and pursue the path of righteousness and goodness which it points out to them. For the Gospel, by which mankind were *called out of darkness into its marvellous light*, should be to the moral, what the sun is to the natural world, and would never fail to produce the fruits of righteousness in minds well prepared and diligently cultivated. But to say how far it doth produce them, or what is the real state of religion among us, would be presumptuous, because it is impossible for human penetra-

tion to discover it. Nevertheless, should there appear to be any *probable* grounds of apprehension, that a growing indifference to the great principles of religious obligation, in conjunction with a narrow, selfish, or licentious spirit, which looks no further than the present scene, should produce an equal indifference to the public welfare; it will surely be a becoming part in the friends of virtue in every rank, to be awake and attentive to all such means as may restore and confirm the influence of the religious principle. And happy shall we be, if, in order to this, we pursue the method recommended by our Apostle—  
*f, giving all diligence, we add to our faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge, and to knowledge temperance, and to temperance patience, and to patience godliness, and to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness charity: for, if these things be in us and abound, we shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.*

Upon the whole—it is of the utmost importance to our happiness, that the foundation of our integrity be carefully laid in the prin-

principles of a solid and rational piety. A *faith* without *knowledge* will also be without *virtue*; but the better we understand our religion, the readier shall we be to practise it, and the abler also to defend it. If *Christianity* therefore hath any enemies, it must be those only who are enemies to *virtue*, or who are ignorant of its real worth and excellence. For the true characters of its sincere professors, like that of its divine author, may sometimes be *evil spoken of*, only because they are not better known. And yet, nothing can obstruct our knowledge of *Christianity*, but our want of *diligence*; nor any thing prevent the happy effects of it, but our want of *virtue*. So that *if our Gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost*\*. —*to them whom the God of this world hath blinded*, either with a vicious course of self-indulgence, or with the false glare of prejudice and self-conceit. May none, none of *us* be of that number! but having the light of truth itself for our direction, let us at all times at-

\* 2 Cor. iv. 3.

tend to it with *diligence*; that our *virtue* may promote our *happiness* in this life, and our *faith* secure it for us in that which is to come.

SER.

## SERMON IX.

## THE EXCELLENCE OF HUMILITY.

MATTHEW xi. 29.

*Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls.*

THE lesson which our divine Master here recommends to our practice, was exemplified in every action of his life; and he gave an unparalleled proof of it in his sufferings and death. —

The whole of that affecting scene has been set before us from the sacred historians, who were the faithful recorders of it; and it exhibits to us such uncommon instances of the most barbarous indignities, and unrelenting malice, on the one part, and such unexam-

pled meekness, and resignation on the other, that had the sufferings of *Jesus* been those of *any* innocent person, they must have excited in us the natural feelings of humanity. If of one who had been, in a remarkable manner, the friend of virtue and of mankind, the case would have been still more affecting: —But when *we know of very truth*, that such were the sufferings of him who was *most high in the glory of God the Father*, but who voluntarily divested himself of all his glory, to take our nature upon him, that he might suffer for our sins, and be *obedient unto death, even the death of the cross*—When we further consider the inestimable benefits that his sufferings have obtained for us—that by his agonies we are relieved—by his stripes we are healed—by his blood we are cleansed; and, by *his tasting death for every man*, we are reconciled to God, and restored to the forfeited inheritance of *life eternal*—it is then that the devout and serious Christian becomes more deeply interested in the sad recital—that the mind feels itself alternately agitated with amazement and love, contrition and gratitude, and unable to comprehend what the *angels themselves desire to look into*, we can only

only adore in silence; acknowledging that *worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive blessing, and honour, and glory, and power*\*, for he hath redeemed us to God by his blood!

It was thus, that our blessed Lord meekly submitted to die for a *guilty* world, after living to reform and instruct an *ignorant* world.—His first appearance was in the humble character of a *teacher*: for instruction was necessary to qualify mankind for salvation; and one of the first lessons he prescribed, was that of *meekness* and *humility*.—The subject was new and little understood.—The Jews, his hearers, had long been in other habits of thinking.—Proud of styling themselves *God's chosen people*, and impatient of subjection to any foreign power, they looked for the *coming* of the Messiah as the great deliverer of their nation; but, now he *was come*, they held his doctrine of *meekness* and *humility* incompatible with the splendor and dignity of that character.—They saw, indeed, that the powers of darkness, the laws of nature, human maladies and diseases, were subject to his con-

\* Rev. v. 12.

trol ; and, seeing all this, they were led to think, that *no man could do the miracles he did except God were with him* \*.

On this ground they, for some time, rested their hopes that *it was he who should redeem Israel* from their hatred subjection to the Roman yoke.—They had even intended, had he not *hid himself from them*, to have taken *him by force and made him their king*. Alas ! they knew not that his *kingdom was not of this world*.—They knew not that his *throne was to be established in righteousness* ! and the victories, that were to grace his reign, were to be gained over *sin and death*—not meant to gratify the infatiate lust of earthly power and dominion ; but to subdue the inordinate pride and passions of mankind—to harmonize their discordant tempers, to reconcile them to God and to one another—in short, to give *rest unto their souls*, by inspiring them with those principles of right conduct of which he himself was both the author and the example.—*Learn of me*, says he, *for I am meek and lowly in heart*, and

\* John iii. 2.

*ye shall find rest unto your souls.* He well knew to what persecutions and sufferings his religion would be exposed through *human prejudice*, before it should be established and protected by *human power*.—His disciples, therefore, were early exhorted to acquire a temper of mind adapted to both situations; a principle that might check the insolence of prosperity, after having supported them under the pressure of adversity.

*Humility, indeed, and meekness, are virtues so peculiarly christian, that other teachers of morality had given them no place in their systems of human duty: they treated them rather as the natural result of temper and constitution; and placed the one in opposition to *anger*, as the other is to *pride*; not knowing that a *meek and quiet spirit is an ornament in the sight of God of great price*\*. But the christian moralist is shewn a more comprehensive view of the power and influence that meekness should have upon human conduct; and considers it as a principle that leads to the practice of every *virtue*, by the*

\* 1 Peter iii. 4.

proper government of every *passion*. Thus instructed, his mind will be prepared against every attack upon his temper.—He will be *angry and sin not*—will rather *bear*, than *revenge*, an injury—will have *joy* without levity—*success* without *insolence*—*hope* without *presumption*—and *fear* without *dejection* and *despair*.

It is this self-government that constitutes the character and happiness of the meek; extending its authority over those appetites and affections which the gracious author of our nature hath given us for the enjoyment of sensitive pleasure; and which, if indulged to excess, and without control, will produce as violent agitations of mind, and be as inconsistent with the gentle spirit of meekness, as those that are excited by the most turbulent passions.

Nor will the influence of this virtue be less powerful in disposing us to bear the adverse turns of life with *patience*, and its prosperous events with *moderation*.—These are trying circumstances of human conduct; and, though very opposite in themselves, are

equally adapted to the exercise of *meekness* ; because the frame and constitution of our nature is equally capable of pain and pleasure, of happiness and misery. A small degree of attention will serve to convince us, that the force of our *animal* powers is, perhaps, more limited than the extent of our *intellectual* faculties ; though both have *their bounds which they cannot pass* : We can no more accomplish every thing we wish to do, than we can comprehend the nature of every thing we see ; and, if we have power enough to reduce ourselves to disease, contempt, and poverty, we are little able to procure all that health, and honour, and affluence we fondly wish for.

In this view, then, the principle of *meekness*, by accommodating the temper of our minds to our situation and circumstances, proceeds upon the most rational grounds.—For which is the more reasonable—to repine and murmur because we *are not* so wise and learned, so great and powerful as *other men are* ; or humbly to acquiesce in, and make the best of the advantages and abilities we find ourselves possessed of ?—But, as religious and accountable creatures, we are taught to form  
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ourselves to this humble temper of mind on a much nobler principle—to consider our nature as the production of an infinitely wise and gracious Creator; and our condition in life, whatever it be, as the wise appointment of his Providence. And indeed a just sense of our subjection to that Almighty Being *who governeth all things in heaven and earth*—an entire submission to all his dispensations, together with a consciousness of our own weakness and imperfections, are the only solid principles on which this virtue can be established; and which, according to all the notions we can form of the divine perfections, will best recommend us to his favour and protection: for *although the Lord be High, yet hath he respect unto the lowly—as for the proud, he beholdeth them afar off*\*.

But we are *social* as well as *religious* creatures, and, as such, the motives drawn from the necessary intercourse we must have with the world, should induce us to endeavour after that equal temper, and calm composure of mind, which is implied in *meekness*.—For here we may have to contend with the temper and caprice of others, as well as with our

\* Psalm cxxxviii. 6.

own temper, on some occasions, as unguarded and capricious, perhaps, as any. Yes, *in the world ye shall have tribulation*, says the great example of all meekness! And do we not find that the world is daily producing occasions for the trial of our meekness?—Is there any situation of life, the felicity whereof is so firmly established, as to say, *it shall never be cast down*? What are all our social connexions? What the most endearing ties of affection, but so many chances set against our happiness? If to-day we *rejoice with them that rejoice*; to-morrow we may *weep with them that weep*.—What we most love we may the soonest lose; and the less apprehensive we are of any such reverse, the more we may suffer by it.—Even the power of *obliging*, is attended with the hazard of *displeasing*; and such are the difficulties created by interfering interests, that in gratifying our *friends*, we often double the number of our *enemies*.—Every thing, in short, we have to do with, in this variable scene; whether it be the *object* or the *enjoyment* of our wishes, our success or disappointments, our pains or our pleasures, our riches or our poverty—all require a steady attention to this virtue, if we would keep the mind

serene,

serene, and unruffled, by the different events that may befall us: for, in proportion as meekness lessens our desires, it will increase our happiness; which *consisteth not* so much in the abundance of the things we possess, as in the wisdom and prudence that direct the use of them.

But it may be said, that, admitting the influence of this virtue on *personal happiness*, it has a natural tendency to keep down and depress, rather than to call forth, that active spirit in man which should prompt him to great and glorious efforts for the *public good*. No! far otherwise it was with the blessed Author of this rule.—He *went about* continually *doing good*: and, after all that his unwearyed goodness could do, both to save his country, and the whole world, compassionately *wept over* the one, and meekly submitted to die for the other.

Yet, even in regard to human efforts, it is wrong to suppose, that *meekness* implies a *meanness* of spirit.—Is it therefore *meanness*, because it is not *ambition*? because it runs not precipitately in the *rave* of glory, but is prepared

prepared so to run as to obtain?—The rapidity of a torrent that carries havock in its progress, may strike the eye with admiration for the moment; but it is the deep and gentle stream that beautifies, and at the same time enriches the country through which it passes.—And will the abilities of the meek be less serviceable to the common happiness, because they are directed by prudence and circumspection?—Surely the more arduous the attempt is wherein you engage, the more does it call for that cool composed temper which this virtue produces: for were you to walk on a narrow precipice, would you not step with more caution than on a wide extended plain? In so perilous a situation, how fatal might be the effect of self-confidence and presumption! and how much better to take the prudent advice of the apostle—*Let him who thinketh be standeth take heed lest he fall*.\*

Still it will be said, that the sustaining principles of meekness and humility are less applicable to the present state of christianity than to its first professors.—Happy as we, of

<sup>1</sup> Cor. x. 12.

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these protestant kingdoms, are in the *free* profession of our faith, we have no danger to fear from the practice of it.—Here the sword of persecution has long been sheathed; and may it ever remain so!—But have we no insidious attacks to guard against from men of corrupt minds—those who are wise in their own conceits? None from the entangling arguments of metaphysical subtilty?—from the delusive snares of false philosophy? and the captivating elegance of profane writings?—Or, if we be so *strong in the faith* as to repel all such attacks, can we stand firm in the slippery paths of *pleasure*? on the giddy heights of *ambition*, and *possess our souls in patience* under the ill offices of our enemies, the coldness of our friends, and the loss of what we held most dear and valuable?—If we be able to do all this, then have we learnt of Christ to be *meek and lowly in heart*, and *shall find rest unto our souls*.—Then shall we *walk worthy of the vocation whereunto we are called*, with all meekness—shall *do nothing through strife, or vain-glory*; but, in lowliness of mind; each *shall esteem others better than themselves*, in all our trials and afflictions, looking up to Jesus for an example.—To him who was the

author

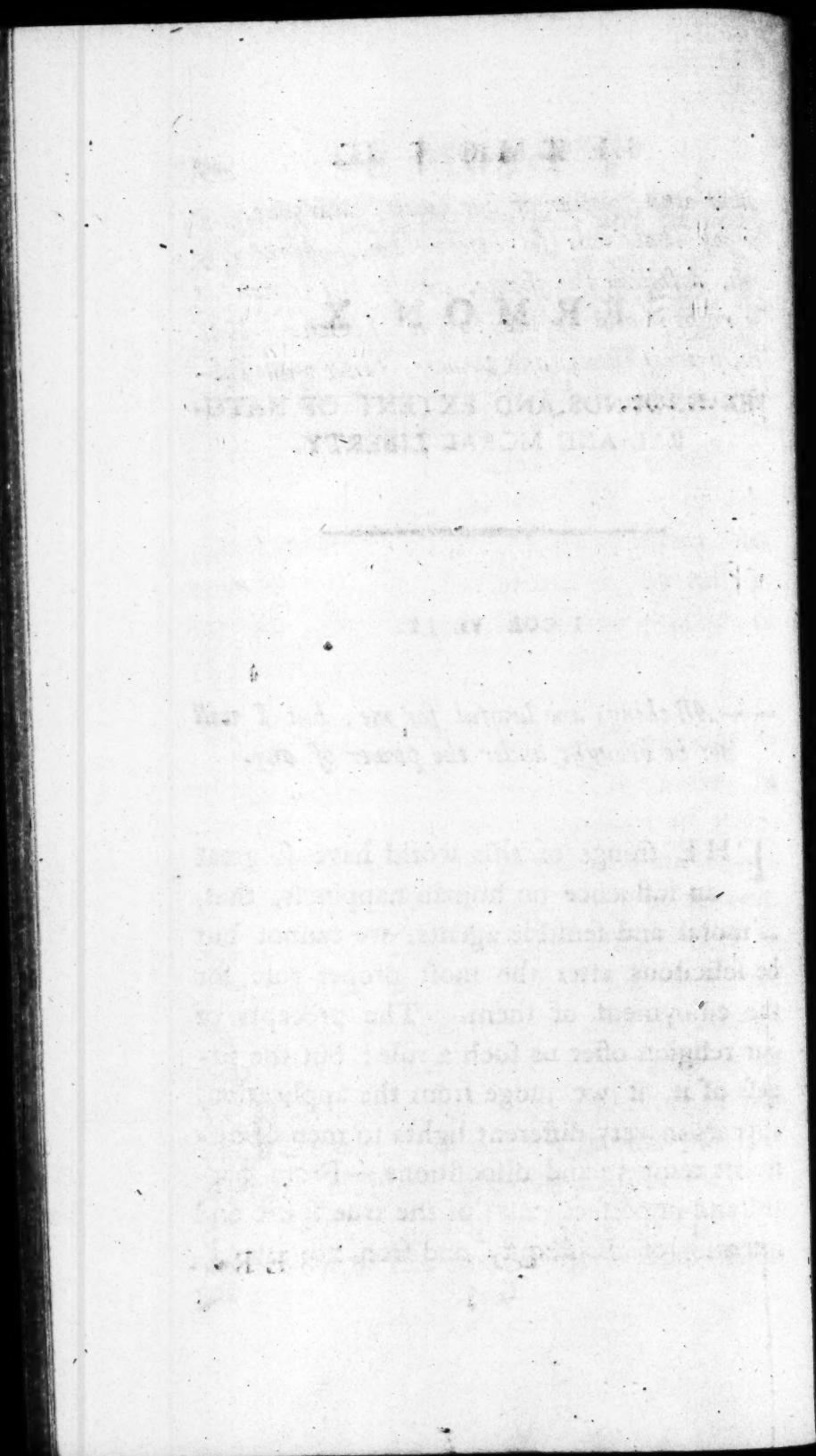
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author and finisher of our faith; and who, for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.---Angels, principalities, and powers, being made subject unto him.

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## SERMON X.

## THE GROUNDS AND EXTENT OF NATURAL AND MORAL LIBERTY.

1 COR. VI. 12.

—All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any.

THE things of this world have so great an influence on human happiness, that, as moral and sensible agents, we cannot but be solicitous after the most proper rule for the enjoyment of them. The precepts of our religion offer us such a rule: but the fitness of it, if we judge from the application, appears in very different lights to men of different tempers and dispositions.—From partial and imperfect views of the true spirit and intention of christianity, and from not attend-

ing to the particular grounds and occasions of those religious precepts that carry an appearance of great severity; men of ease and pleasure will see nothing in christian morality, but a rigid impracticable set of duties that their nature revolts at: whilst others of an abstemious, or melancholy disposition, are led to believe, that the very essence of religion consists in the observance of them: and thus both the one and the other, by mistaking the intention, may hurt the practice of christian morality.

Now between tempers and opinions so widely different, the preacher, whenever he attempts to explain such a passage of scripture as that before us, may find himself in a delicate situation. Unable perhaps to convince either party, he may offend both.—The sanguine may think him too *rigid*; the melancholy too *yielding*—the one may charge him with *prophecyng smooth things*; the other with inculcating such *hard sayings* that *none can bear them*. Let us then refer the decision of this point to the authority of St. Paul himself; who during his ministry at Corinth, seems to have had to do with people as different

rent in manners, as they were in principle: for what could be more different than a rigid abstemious Jew, and a gay licentious Corinthian?—many of both which denominations he had converted to the doctrines, though in his absence they had differed about the duties of christianity. Strongly bigotted to their ritual ordinances, even to the most trivial of them, the Jews, who, as a commercial people, had settled in that city, where still desirous, after their conversion to christianity, to observe a *difference* of *meats, and days*; of *new moons and sabbaths*: whereas the Corinthians, a more polite and luxuriant people, having long been accustomed to every sensual indulgence, *and to think that every thing was lawful for them*, could but ill relish the pure and rational self-government which the Apostle had enjoined them. Neither the philosophy, nor the religion, nor the laws of their city, had hitherto laid them under any such restraints.—Their *philosophy* had established pleasure, though not in the sense in which *they* took it, as their supreme good: their wealth and opulence furnished them with the means of indulgence; the impure rites of idolatry were *incentives* to pursue it: and it seems

to have been the policy of the Roman government, to leave their conquered provinces to the full enjoyment of pleasure, that they might the less regret their loss of power.

If then the Jewish converts concluded, that it could never be the intention of christianity to abrogate the rites and ceremonies which their great lawgiver had enjoined them to observe; the Corinthians might also conclude, that what *they* had been used to think lawful in a state of *nature*, could not be sinful in a state of *grace*—and, accordingly, they seem to have justified their licentious conduct by a kind of proverbial saying, used at Corinth, that *all things were lawful for them*; and, provided they had a sincere faith in Christ, they might still indulge their sensual propensities;—might feast on the *meats offered* in sacrifice to *idols*, and gratify their impure lusts and appetites as they had been wont to do.

The Apostle, ever watchful over the behaviour of his converts, was no sooner informed of these and other irregularities, than he set himself to oppose and correct them.—It is true,

true, says he, that christianity, by freeing us from many painful restraints of the Jewish law, such as *touch not, taste not, handle not*, hath enlarged the bounds of our natural liberty; but it teacheth us that the true dignity of our nature consists in a strict attention to the morality of our actions; for, to repeat your own assertion, though *all things be lawful for me, yet I will not be brought under the power of any*. It is thus, that christian morality consults both the privileges, and the happiness, of our nature.—Adapted to the whole of our constitution; to our passions, and our reason; to our sensitive and spiritual powers; it allows the former their claim to a reasonable share of *pleasure*, and reminds the latter of their obligation to *duty*. Accordingly the declarations in the text will furnish us with a proper rule of conduct in both cases; and will lead us to consider, first, the grounds and extent of our *natural liberty*; and, secondly, the necessity of preserving our *moral freedom*—for though *all things are lawful for us*, we must not be brought under the power of any.

I. Now

I. Now the true foundation of our *natural liberty*, as it regards the pursuit or enjoyment of the things of this life, is plainly laid in the very frame and constitution of our nature—in the relation we bear to the general system of things around us; and in the mutual fitness and agreement between our appetites and their objects: or, to use the Apostle's expression, in *meats for the belly, and the belly for meats.*

Infinitely happy in himself, and infinitely good to others, the all-wise Creator hath dispensed to every order of beings such a portion of happiness or pleasure, as their respective faculties are fitted to enjoy. But he hath visibly distinguished the human species with powers and capacities, which exalt it to the highest rank of earthly beings. From that point of elevation, man beholds himself invested with a free dominion over the whole animal and vegetable race. Wherever he casts his eyes, he sees how liberally the hand of Providence diffuseth *plenty* and *pleasure* over all his works—pleasure, in an infinite variety of objects to delight his sensitive, or to employ his intellectual faculties.—Plenty, in a

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profusion of every thing necessary to supply his wants, or minister to his convenience.—Hath God then given us all these *things richly to enjoy*, and at the same time forbidden them to be comfortably enjoyed? Surely he who grasps all animal life in the tender bonds of parental affection,—who feedeth even the young ravens that call upon him \*, cannot be supposed to withhold the choicest of his blessings from the noblest of his creatures; cannot desire that man should mortify and doom himself to a bare sustenance, while *all things living are filled with plenteousness* †.—Why are we impelled by the first law of nature to consult and provide for the happiness and preservation of our being?—Wherefore are we sensible of the relation between our desires, and the objects of their gratification; if we must perpetually strive to counteract that law, and suppress those desires?—Are we prompted by natural and generous affections to others of our kind? Are our best enjoyments imperfect without society; and society itself imperfect, without that closer union which is formed by the sacred ties of conju-

\* Job xxxviii. 41.

† Psalm civ. 28.

gal and parental affection?—and is there any thing in religion that denies *these things are lawful for us?*—Nothing in *true religion*; but enough among the gross perverters of it in the Popish church; who, to serve the ends of worldly policy, and to secure their dominion over the consciences and property of mankind, have erected a system of laws that set nature and religion at variance with each other:—*forbidding to marry; and commanding to abstain from meats:* though the scripture expressly declares that *marriage is honourable in all men*—and that *every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused; if it be received with thanksgiving* \*, and enjoyed with moderation.

But, beside these privileges, to which mankind in general have a common right; there are other more enlarged claims to natural liberty that arise from the particular rank and circumstances of individuals. Here, indeed, the extent of our *natural*, must be governed by that of our *civil* liberty: by which, if it be limited in some points, it gains the advan-

\* 1 Tim. iv. 4.

tage of a legal protection for all the rest.—For the great ends of society, like those of nature and providence, admit not of a parity of condition in this respect. In the heavenly system, *one star differeth from another star in glory.*—In the social system *one man differeth from another man in power.* Now as all power supposes liberty; so, in our present view, power may be considered as the result of wisdom, or riches, and honours.—Hence the various, but necessary distinctions, of rank and station; necessary to the good order, and the very being of society. The exercise, then, of *natural liberty*, both as to the degrees and kinds of enjoyment, must either be in proportion to the degrees of riches and honours; or these high attainments, which form the *distinctions* in life, would make no difference in condition. But whence is it that we naturally associate the ideas of pomp and grandeur, and elegant accommodation, with the possession of high rank, and splendid fortunes? is it merely from the habit of seeing them thus united? or, because the connexion is deeper laid in the established order and fitness of things? because whatever adorns and casts a lustre on the superior ranks, and presents

sents them to public view in splendor and magnificence, is at the same time adapted to secure a proper respect to authority; and to keep up a due sense of subordination and dependence: agreeably to which the scriptures tell us, that *riches and honours come of God*—that it is *he who maketh one man to differ from another*—that it is *he who giveth us power to get wealth*; and, what alone makes it a blessing, the *power also to enjoy it*.

But though it hath pleased the common Father of us all, to *appoint one vessel to honour, and another to dishonour* \*; yet, by constituting the necessary distinctions of rank and condition, he hath not precluded the individuals of any rank from the means of improving their condition. In animal life the slowest reptile will strive to taste those delicious fruits, which the birds of the air can reach with the greatest facility; and with regard to human abilities, even the *honours* of this world, though properly seated on an eminence of *difficult and laborious ascent*, are not inaccessible to the efforts of the *virtuous*.—Or if they should; yet *virtue is honour in all ranks*; and honest

\* Romans ix. 21.

industry

industry is virtue even in the lowest. Whilst *riches*, which facilitate the attainment of all other good things, and are held out as incitements to a diligent application of every kind of ability, are often found in the low vale of life; and may be gathered, in some degree, by any *industrious* hand. Nay, the very ~~use~~ of riches by one part of the world, (and they are not riches if not used,) furnishes the other part with the means of acquiring them: for such is the wise appointment of Providence, that the property of the great, which is chiefly drawn from the labour and industry of the lower ranks, must be returned in exchange for the pleasures and conveniences which that very industry supplies them with.—Just as the fountain of light and heat attracts the vapours from the earth, only to return them in dews and rain, for the better nourishment of its productions.

Such, and so extensive is the natural liberty of man.—Distributed by the bountiful giver of all things to *every one according to his abilities*; but the exertion of those abilities, together with the benefits arising from them, are denied to no man. Hard would be the

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condition of human nature if the case were otherwise. For *who planteth a vineyard, and eateth not of the fruit thereof?*—it is the apostle that puts the question—or *who feedeth a flock, and eateth not of the milk of the flock?*\*—*Go thy way then, says the royal preacher, eat thy bread with joy, and drink thy wine with a cheerful heart, and enjoy the good of all thy labour: it is the gift of God* †.—

It certainly is; and may the voluptuous think it so!—But is there no *condition* annexed to this divine donation? *No caution* to be observed in the exercise of this glorious privilege?—Does the boasted superiority of our nature consist in being *all* sense, *all* desire—composed of *nothing* but appetites and passions; and *capable* of nothing beyond the riches, and honours, and pleasures of this world?—Far otherwise! All these pursuits are only relative to the present state of things. If they form the *distinctions* of this life, they also form the *trials* of it: but the *eternal* distinctions of condition will be adjudged, not according to the *present* disparity of rank and

\* 1 Cor. ix. 7.

† Eccles. v. 19.

station, (for God is no respector of persons) but according to the degrees of virtue that supported and adorned them.

II. On this view, then, it remains to be considered, in the second place, what conduct we are to observe under the circumstances that may be appointed both as trials of our virtue, and conditions of our happiness. For nature may revolt at virtue, because our nature is *free*. We may prefer a licentious to a temperate conduct,—the pleasures of this life to the happiness of the next: but conscience, which is the noblest part of our nature, will not fail to remind us that we must be accountable for such a preference; and therefore acceptable because we *are free*.—Here, then, it becomes our duty to assert and maintain our *moral liberty*; or the *power of acting agreeably to the deliberate judgment of reason and conscience*; which is the distinguished privilege of rational agents. For, as sensitive beings it might be a dangerous privilege that *all things are lawful for us*—dangerous perhaps to our present, certainly so to our future happiness; except we resolve with the apostle, *not to be brought under the power*

of *any thing*. It needs not be observed, that reason must either govern our appetites, or it will be governed by them.—And yet, with all our reason about us, how insensibly is the freedom and governing power of the mind betrayed, or given up to idle habits and the most trifling indulgencies?—too trifling indeed to think of; did it not serve to remind us, that *we are apt to let our very foibles govern us!*—Surely then we ought to keep the strongest guard against habits of the highest indulgence, since we find it so hard to secure ourselves from the attacks of the lowest; especially, as by keeping the will free from any habitual bias of our sensual affections, we should be able to confine *all* our pursuits after the good things of this life, within the reasonable limits of temperance and justice. And within *those* limits, what is there that deserves the name of pleasure, or wealth, or honour, but may lawfully be enjoyed to all the purposes of *present*, without hazarding our *future* happiness.—Even the resolution in the text is not pointed against the *natural* and *lawful*, but the *habitual* and *licentious* indulgence of our appetites.—Not against any *honest* endeavours after the good things of life, but against

against injustice in the means, and excess in the enjoyment. It supposes indeed, what we all experience, that *we have a law in our members, warring against the law of our mind*\*—and in this consists our trial: but it likewise supposes that in proportion as our condition in life gives us the power of *indulgence*, our reason should maintain the power of *restraint*: because on this depends our *virtue*. So that after all, the *moral liberty* of man will be found to result from the right direction of the several powers and capacities of our nature to their proper ends.—*Desires and appetites* form one part of our constitution, and nature claims to gratify them; but, *reason, understanding, and conscience*, compose the noblest part; and it is their high office to control and preside over those appetites; to select the lawful objects of their gratification, to determine the times, as well as measure, of our indulgence:—indeed to preserve that subordination of our sensitive, to our rational, powers, which constitutes the dignity and happiness of the whole man.

\* Rom. vii. 23.

*This would be to act agreeably to that order and harmony which should obtain in all the works of God. In the material world they do obtain; and the effect is beauty—and, as far as they obtain in the moral world, the effect is happiness. But human freedom, so necessary to the trial of human virtue, destroys the harmony and order that should subsist between the several parts of our constitution; and, in reality, acts against nature; when desires and appetites are suffered to take the lead, and to exalt themselves above the still, small voice of reason and conscience.* In this disordered state, we may be said to *use our liberty for a cloak of malice*—for a cover to the most criminal conduct; if the object of our desire, whether it be *the lust of the flesh, or the lust of the eye, or the pride of life*, should make every other consideration bend to the attainment of it.—In which case, we shall not only *be brought under the power of that desire*, but in a moral sense become slaves to it.—We shall *let sin reign in our mortal bodies*, so as to exercise an absolute dominion over us.—We shall be *in bondage to corruption, and the servants of sin*. But what a mean, unworthy master is *this to be brought under*

under the power of? and to what an abject condition doth a free and rational being degrade himself when he becomes *the servant of sin!* Alas! it is a condition equally dangerous and unprofitable—for *the only wages of sin is death.* There is the fatal period of all sensual indulgence; whether criminal in itself, or pursued by criminal methods: and the bare *possibility* of those endless sufferings that are threatened to succeed it, should induce the most voluptuous to be *made free from sin*, and to *become the servants of God*; in a consciousness of whose favour *there is fulness of joy*; and at whose right hand there are *pleasures for evermore* \*.

But to conclude.—As the respective claims of reason and appetite are founded in the present constitution of things, so the kind intention of christian morality, is to direct the exercise of both to the proper ends for which they were appointed; to make this life virtuous, and the next happy. For pleasure and virtue would not be incompatible, were reason permitted to direct our pleasures. So that

\* Psalm xvi. 11.

however men of *rigid* piety may *affect* to abstain from all pleasure ; because some are sinful, to exclude the agreeable perceptions of their very senses ; and, even *while they are in the body*, to take no *care for the things of the body*—to be actuated only by *spiritual feelings* :—yet true religion holds no such language as *touch not, taste not, handle not*. The gracious Author of *our* religion, who *knew what was in man*, in giving us a rule of conduct, had regard to both our sensible and spiritual nature ; or it could not have been a proper rule *for man*.—But, if religion leaves us the *honest* use of our abilities to *obtain* the good things of life ; and a *sufficient use* of our appetites to *enjoy* them, let us not neglect its many friendly cautions, to beware, lest by too eager a pursuit of *pleasure*, we lose our *happiness* : but amidst *all* the *things that are lawful for us*, let us be ever careful so to enjoy them, as not to be brought under the power of *any*.

## S E R M O N XI.

CHRIST's CONSOLATION TO HIS APOSTLES  
ON THEIR APPROACHING TRIALS.

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JOHN xiv. 1.

*Let not your heart be troubled:—ye believe in  
God, believe also in me.*

WE have, in these words, the comfortable advice of religion to the disconsolate and distressed; and it never applies so forcibly, as when it proceeds from the lips of a dying friend. The solemnity of that scene naturally excites the most serious attention; and the more the hearers are interested in the subject, the more sensibly will they be impressed by the particulars recommended to them.

Such, we may suppose, were the feelings of the eleven apostles (for one had withdrawn

to execute his traitorous purpose,) when assembled to receive the last instructions of their divine Master: the merciful ends of whose mission, and the meritorious sufferings by which they were to be obtained, together with his triumphant resurrection and ascension into heaven, had been frequently intimated, but hitherto little understood by them.

Convinced by the miraculous powers, which according to the prophetic descriptions he had frequently, and mercifully displayed, they readily conceived him to be *the Messias that was to come*: but, from right premises, they had drawn a wrong conclusion, “that the principal end of his coming was to *restore again the kingdom to Israel*”—a notion which suggested very flattering hopes of participating in his earthly grandeur.—So strongly were they impressed with it, that there had even been *a strife among them who should be the greatest!* Nor had his positive declaration yet convinced them, that he *came not to be ministered unto*, as earthly princes are, *but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many* \*.

\* Matt. xx. 28.

The hour was now coming, when this declaration was about to be realized.—He therefore devoted the short space of time that was to intervene between his being betrayed, apprehended, and crucified, as he likewise did after his resurrection, in administering comfort to his disciples, and instructing them in the very important charge that was soon to be committed to them.

But through the whole of this solemn charge, nothing is said to excite their pity for his own approaching suffering, nothing to inflame their zeal, to rescue him from the nightly band that was about to apprehend him.—The main objects he had then in view, were to fortify the minds of his disciples under this sad reverse of circumstances ;—to caution them against being *offended* at the opprobrious manner in which they were soon to see him treated ; and, once more, to apprise them of the cruel usage they *themselves* would meet with *for his sake*.

On the other hand, he assured them of the assistance and support of the Holy Spirit, under their severest trials ; a support whereof  
they

they themselves would be fully sensible, from the miraculous powers they should *feel* themselves endowed with—powers that would inspire them with the glory of being the instructors of an *ignorant*, and reformers of a *sinful world*—that would enable them to propose the gracious terms of his gospel to all nations in their own language: when, after enlarging his kingdom of truth and righteousness upon earth, they should be received into those heavenly mansions of bliss, whether he, their Lord and Master, was about to ascend, and *prepare a place for them*; that *where he was, they might also be.*

Of this last discourse of Christ to his apostles, which of itself has furnished a strong *presumptive argument* for the truth of our religion, it may again be said, that *he spake as never man spake*. For it contains such elevated sentiments, such a consciousness of divine authority, such an intimate knowledge of the secret purposes of heaven, as far surpasses all the powers of human contrivance.—It would, indeed, have been a most impious presumption; must have been deemed the highest blasphemy, for mere man to have held

held the language, or dictated with the authority, here assumed.

Whereas in Christ, the son of God, *who came from the Father*, and was soon to return to him; who spake *not of himself, but as the Father gave him commandment*, all was consistent, and in character.—To him the whole plan of the œconomy of grace and mercy was open: he best knew whom to select as the fittest instruments for carrying it into execution: and the wisdom of his choice is evident from the effect.—The humble stations of the apostles could give them no great influence; nor was their uncultivated understanding capable of forming very deep designs—it was hereafter to be opened by the Holy Spirit, who was *to teach them all things*.

Even now they were unable to comprehend the purport and magnitude of a commission, that was soon to devolve upon them; hearing it recited in silent amazement, and without reply. Their Lord, therefore, with a tenderness suited to their approaching trials, addresses them in the encouraging exhortation of the text.—*Let not your hearts be troubled:*

troubled: *Ye believe in God, believe also in me.*—I know your faith to be firmly founded in the perfections and providence of God.—You reverence his power, adore his goodness, and are obedient to his laws.—You acknowledge and praise him for the many wonderful deliverances he wrought for your forefathers, by Moses and the prophets: but you are henceforth to believe on *me* likewise, who am the *Messiah* foretold by *Moses and the prophets*—on *me*, who am sent to complete and perfect divine revelation; who am to work a more plenteous redemption; and, by the covenanted sacrifice of myself, to give *assurance unto all men*, that *whosoever liveth and believeth in me, shall not die eternally.*

Such was the purport of our Lord's affectionate exhortation to the disconsolate apostles; and such the occasion of addressing it to them.—Yet not to *them* only was it addressed; but, through them, to *us*, and the whole christian world. In *the everlasting Gospel*, which, like its divine Author, is *the same yesterday, to-day and for ever*, we likewise are exhorted, *not to let our hearts be troubled.* And why are we here devoutly assembled together, on this

this sacred day, but for the religious purpose of testifying our gratitude for the infinite goodness of God, in restoring a forfeited world to grace and favour, through the mediation, the meritorious sufferings and glorious resurrection of Christ.—Yes, blessed Lord! *We believe in God, we believe also in thee! help thou our unbelief!* If we sincerely join in this solemn declaration, as I trust we do, from our thus giving a public proof of it; there will be little occasion to enlarge upon the duty of religious faith, or the great and precious promises annexed to it, by which we may be partakers of the divine glory. But still it imports us seriously to examine ourselves, *whether we be in the faith;* upon what grounds we have embraced it, and what influence it has upon our conduct.

If this be in proportion to the opportunities and talents committed to us, it is well.—In this protestant country the sacred scriptures are open to all: and all may read, in their *own tongue wherein they were born,* the *wonderful works of God!* On them, and on them only, we may lay that sure foundation, whereon to build up our *holy* faith, which can-

*not be shaken: happy! if we suffer it not to be undermined by the crafty wiliness of those who lay in wait to deceive—of those whose evil communications corrupt good manners—of those who attempt to set reason and revelation at variance with each other; and substitute moral virtue, in the place of religious faith; which is the pure source of every virtue, both personal and social: and, what is more than all, describes to us that sure and certain hope of a blessed immortality, which human reason ever thirsted after, but which the wisest and best man of the heathen world, could only hope, “that some messenger from heaven would in time disclose.”*

This hope has long been confirmed to the christian world; and we lay the foundation of our faith in a continued series of predictions, gradually advancing from the beginning of time, to the final dissolution, and renovation, of all things. There are prophetic descriptions that apply to both these future events; and the accomplishment of those relating to the *redemption* of the world, affords a reasonable ground of belief in the *renovation* of it.—But the former compose the proper subject

subject for our present consideration ; and, of the various prophecies respecting the *Messiah*, the *incredulous* themselves do not reject all. They readily admit, that the *meek and lowly* Jesus, the *son of man*, was born in poverty, lived some time in obscurity, and had not long shewn himself openly, before he was seized, condemned, and crucified.

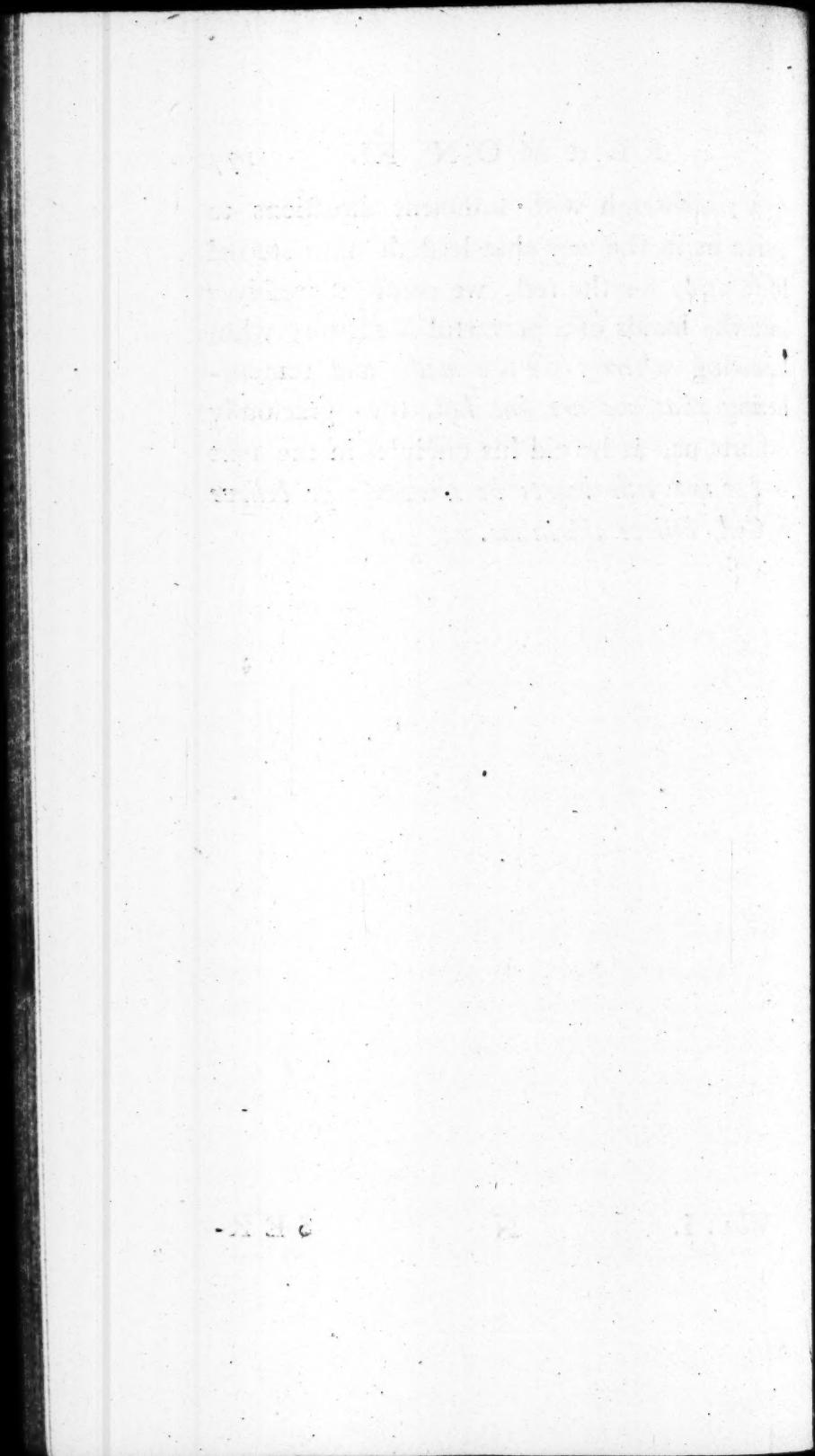
But, when, after being thus *numbered with the transgressors*, and bearing the *fins of many*, he bursts the prison of the grave, and *swallows up death in victory*—when he triumphantly re-enters into his *glory* ; and, giving *gifts unto men*, he proves himself to be the *son of God with power*—it is then that presumptuous reason revolts against the authority of revelation, and prides itself in *an evil heart of unbelief*.

Not so the honest, unprejudiced enquirer; the sincere and well informed christian, whose *eye is single*, and whose *heart is pure*: who examines with candour, what is offered in evidence, and lays the foundation of his faith in a clear conviction of his understanding.—Thus with divine revelation for our guide,  
and

and led by the hand of prophets, apostles, and other holy men of God, into the secret paths of Providence, *we* see how justice and mercy proceed, with equal steps, from the first entrance of *sin* into the world, and *death*, the denounced *penalty of sin*, through the whole progress of our promised redemption, to its full and final accomplishment, by the voluntary sacrifice of the Son of God upon the cross.—Through the all-sufficient merits of that oblation, we behold the forfeited gift of immortality restored—an offended God proclaiming *peace and good-will towards man*:—his justice satisfied, his mercy displayed—his will explained, and the laws of his moral government vindicated and asserted.

But if, in the present state of our existence, we see but a small part of the infinite plan of heaven—if *clouds and thick darkness* intercept some points of view, and others are only *seen through a glass darkly*.—If the mysterious union of the divine and human nature be, as yet, concealed from mortal eyes, and reserved for the contemplation of our spiritualized bodies in a future state:—we must remember that we now *walk by faith, not by sight*;

sight; although with sufficient directions to guide us in the way that leadeth unto eternal life: and, for the rest, we commit ourselves into the hands of a powerful Mediator, who, knowing *whereof we are made*, and remembering that we are but dust, thus graciously exhorts us, as he did his disciples in the text —*Let not your hearts be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me.*



## S E R M O N XII.

THE NECESSITY OF ZEAL AND DILIGENCE  
IN RELIGION.

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MATT. vii. and part of the 13th and 14th  
verses.

*Enter ye in at the strait gate—because strait is  
the gate, and narrow is the way that leadeth  
unto life.*

THE advice in the text hath happiness for its object; in the pursuit of which to be properly directed, is a considerable step towards the attainment of it: for though mankind are universally agreed in making *present happiness* the end of all their actions, yet too many are apt to be mistaken in the way that leads to real happiness.—To set us right in a point of so much importance, the

blessed Author of our religion condescended to leave the mansions of bliss and glory, in order to guide and conduct *us* to them; and hath left his gospel to direct, his example to animate, and his promises to encourage us in our progress through the present transitory scene, to an *inheritance incorruptible, and that fadeth not away*. But the passage leading to that promised land is not through the spacious and flowery paths of sensual pleasure: for these, how inviting soever they may appear, are full of danger, and too often lead to death and misery. On the other hand, the way that leadeth unto life is fairly represented by our divine teacher as *narrow*, and the gate that gives admittance *strait*: but it is shut to none that are qualified, and will strive to enter in;—for every one that *seeketh* it diligently *shall find it*; and to him that *knocketh* with perseverance, *it will be opened*.

The expression here made use of by our Saviour is figurative; and means the gate of entrance into the gospel covenant, and may perhaps be taken from a custom among the Jews, of introducing such particular friends as were invited to their marriage festivals, (which are frequently

frequently alluded to in the gospel) through a strait and narrow gate ; that the person, appointed to that office, might thereby be able to exclude those who had no pretensions to be admitted.

But not to insist any longer on the *explanation*, let us turn our thoughts to the *instruction*, which this precept was intended to convey to us, which may be reduced to this plain conclusion, that the happiness which our religion holds out to us, will not be conferred on the indolent, inconsiderate, and self-indulging christian ; but on those who steadily pursue, and diligently practise, the religious and moral duties which the gospel enjoins as the condition of that happiness.

An observation or two on the nature and capacities of man, will confirm the truth of this conclusion. For, from the strictest enquiries we are able to make, we find that the human kind are the only earthly creatures who are so *fearfully and wonderfully made*, as to be capable of religion. Whatever glimmerings of reason are discoverable in other animals, they certainly express not the least

consciousness of religious obligation.—All their hopes and fears are excited by the present object, and by that determined. Whereas man, by the help of his reasoning and reflecting powers, can extend his views into the distant scenes of futurity. The hopes of immortality are interwoven in his very nature, and from being conscious of what he is, a rational and accountable being, he cannot help presaging what he *may* be: that he *may* be happy, in the life which is to come:—But for what? not merely for being a reasonable creature; and, as such, of a more excellent nature than other animals; but for endeavouring to act up to the distinguishing privileges of his nature, or his peculiar capacity for moral and religious goodness.—The end of our creation, then, must be so much nobler than that of the brutes, by how much the faculties we are endowed with are superior to theirs in excellence. And if happiness, eternal happiness, be that end, what more probable means can we think of to obtain it, than by making daily advances, (though the path be rugged and difficult of ascent) in the ways of virtue and religion? Happiness, on these conditions, will be a *sure* reward:

but

but can any one lay claim to a *reward*, except he first performs the *service* for which it was promised ? To dispense favours where there is no merit, and with an undistinguishing hand, is a degree of weakness that no man of common discernment would be guilty of : but it is even impious to suppose, that the infinitely wise and just Governor of the universe, will confer the same glorious rewards on those subjects of his *who would not that he should rule over them*, as on those *faithful and good servants* who did his pleasure ; and whose sincere though imperfect obedience, will be *counted unto them for righteousness*. In this manner might we reason on the principles of natural religion, but revelation has placed the terms of our acceptance in the clearest light ; the great conditions that run through the whole tenor of the gospel-covenant, being faith in Christ, and obedience to the will of God. And if there be any declaration in scripture more express than another, it is *that* wherein our Saviour assures us, that *not every one that faith unto him Lord ! Lord !* or thinks it enough to comply with the external forms of his religion, *shall enter into the kingdom of heaven* : *but he only that doeth the will of his father who*

*is in heaven.* Accordingly, we find this important truth confirmed by various parables and declarations of our blessed Saviour, by the reception of the *wise*, and the exclusion of the *foolish virgins*—by the slothful and unprofitable servant, who hid his talent, and neglected to improve it; and is therefore cast out into utter darkness; whilst the faithful and good servant, who did his duty, is admitted into the joy of his Lord. These are cautions of general import: and to wean us from that daily self-indulgence, that forgetfulness of God, which too often attends a state of ease and affluence, as well as to support us in a *patient continuance in well-doing*, in spite of all the difficulties that poverty, pain, or distress of any sort, may throw in our way, we have the just reply to the unavailing petition of the *rich man* in the parable set before us in very affecting terms: *Son, remember that thou in thy life-time receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now, he is comforted, and thou art tormented* \*.

\* Luke xvi. 25.

These,

These, with a variety of such like representations in scripture, were given for our instruction and admonition. They are intended to excite, and stir up in us, such a degree of vigilance, activity, and zeal in the discharge of our duty, as is suited to the state of trial and probation in which we are here placed: to animate us with such a noble fortitude of soul, as may enable us to subdue all the opposition we meet with from the prevalence of custom, or the allurements of example: to kindle in our breasts such fervent desires after piety and virtue, that no temptation may be so powerful as to seduce, no passion so predominant as to lead us astray from the path of duty: but that *laying aside every weight and the sin which doth so easily beset us, we may run with patience the race of virtue that is set before us.* We must nevertheless observe, that the allusion made use of by our Saviour in the text, to express the difficulties that are to be encountered in our progress to happiness by the path of duty, is less applicable to the present state of christianity, than to the first *professors* or even the first *reformers* of our holy religion. Narrow, indeed, was then the *way*, that was beset through-

throughout with pain, contempt, and poverty.—Strait and difficult of access was the *gate*, when persecution was the usual passport, and men were *through much tribulation to enter into the kingdom of God*. Thus we know that there was a time, when that glorious army of saints and martyrs, whom we this day commemorate \*, rather than dishonour and deny their religion, had *trial of cruel mockings and scourgings; of bonds also and imprisonment*.—There was a time when other faithful servants of God were *stoned, sawn asunder; slain with the sword; wandered about in deserts and mountains; in dens and caves of the earth; being destitute, afflicted, tormented* †. —There was a time, also, when the disciples and followers of our blessed Lord, as he himself foretold, *were reviled and persecuted, and all manner of evil charged upon them falsely for his name's sake*. But happier times have been reserved for *us*, if we be wise enough to make a proper use of them; if we exert our endeavours to promote our own happiness, and to advance the interests of religion, with a diligence becoming the protection it has long

\* Nov. 1. All Saints.

† Heb. xi. 37.

enjoyed.

enjoy'd.—Free as we are in regard to the *profession* of our faith, we cannot say that we are exposed to any danger by the *practice* of it! But shall we therefore think it enough that our more pious ancestors, by much toil and peril, effected the glorious work of reformation in our *religion*; as if that was to *supersede* the necessity, or *atone* for the want of reformation in our *morals*? For, where is the difference between our not being blessed with so pure a *profession of faith*, and being utterly indifferent to the *obligations* arising from it? Surely we have but small pretensions to the so much boasted name of *Protestants*, whilst we shew ourselves so luke-warm and spiritless in maintaining the more important character of *Christians*. So that to content ourselves with the bare hopes of immortal felicity, regardless all the while of the only sure way of obtaining it, is to act a more foolish part than that of the *sluggard*, who *will not plow by reason of the cold*; and therefore, as the Wise Man observes, *shall he beg in harvest, and have nothing*.

And shall it be said, that the rigid duties of religion (for men must first disguise Christianity,

anity, before they can disparage it) are fit only for those gloomy unsociable mortals who can neither enjoy themselves nor others?—That *they* cannot conceive it inconsistent with the infinite perfections of God to consign to endless punishment such frail and imperfect beings as men are, for the momentary follies, or the social indulgencies, of this life? Let the superstitious and the melancholy, say they, start and tremble at the justice of the Divine Being: They will do greater honour to his perfections by relying on his mercy, and confiding in his goodness.—Mistaken men! to think that one perfection of the Deity can interfere thus with another! Does not the idea of *goodness* strictly include also that of *justice*? and is not the discouragement of vice as essential to the notion of goodness, as the rewarding of virtue? We do not fix the imputation of cruelty and injustice on human governors for inflicting punishments on the guilty; when, by so doing, they best consult the safety and welfare of the whole community. And *shall not the supreme Judge of all the earth do right?* The *goodness* of God therefore can furnish no other *pléa* for presuming on his *mercy*, than what arises from a delay

delay of his justice ; which *because it is not speedily executed, the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil* \*.

To what cause, then, are we to impute so much indifference and inattention to the duties which our religion prescribes, as the only certain means of securing both our present and future happiness ?—It would be easy to assign *many* causes ; and those as various as the temper, the circumstances, the connexions, the opinions, the fashion of the world, and the follies of mankind. At present we need only observe, that as the main springs of human conduct are laid in our rational and sensitive faculties, (which are different though not intended to be contradictory principles ;) so both would operate to produce human happiness, did we carefully regulate their respective tendencies. But our passions being always capable of exerting themselves before our reason, those should be restrained and held in by discipline, till this, by the aid of religious principle, has acquired sufficient strength to check their impetuosity. And

\* Eccles. viii. 11.

yet

yet in the early and tender part of life, when right impressions are most easily made, how little care do some parents take so to cultivate the minds of youth, as that they may improve in *wisdom* as they increase in *stature*? and make equal advances in moral virtues, and in graceful accomplishments? Instead of this, how many are permitted to learn, what their growing passions will never let them forget? a taste for the vanities, the pleasures and follies of the world: by which means they are unhappily initiated in a *fashionable*, before they are taught how to lead either a *rational*, or *religious life*; or, not being properly directed in the *way they ought to go*, they take *that* at a venture, which is most beaten and frequented.—Every one sees, and all good men lament, that the general turn of the present age is to dissipation and amusement—that it is the employment of one part of the world to furnish the opportunities of diversion, and the business of the other, to pursue and enjoy them.—Indeed, *pleasure* courts us in such various shapes, and lays her snares in so many places, that like the harlot in the Proverbs \*, *gay in attire, and subtle*

\* Prov. vii. 12.

*of spirit, now she is abroad, now in the streets, and lieth in wait at every corner.* Nay, so various, and at the same time so magnificent are our public places of resort, that what was observed some years ago, is still more applicable to the present times.—“A sober stranger, “ on his first view, would be apt to think “ himself in some of those enchanted islands “ he had read of in the fictions of the poets ; “ and that all the pompous scenes of pleasure he beheld, were rather the effect of “ delusion, than actually produced by design, “ and supported by the encouragement of all “ ranks of people.” And it would be well if these, and many other expensive refinements, were only to be urged in proof of that great accession of wealth which has flowed in upon us ; but the mischief is, that whilst *a spirit of imitation* operates more strongly than *a sense of convenience*,—these extravagant gratifications will be as often indulged by the indigent to conceal their poverty, as by the opulent to display their wealth : or, however, that none may *go without his share of voluptuousness* ; if some branches of enjoyment are above the vulgar reach, others are brought down to the level of their abilities : for whilst

the

the tendency to self-gratification is so universal, there will not be wanting opportunities of indulging it.

But the most general cause of disregard to the duties and promises of religion, is assigned by our blessed Lord himself, in the parallel passage of St. Matthew, where he tells his disciples, that *wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be that go in thereat*.—Various indeed are the paths of pleasure; all much beaten and frequented: ever crowded with passengers; and the gates ever open to admit them.—*There* is to be found whatever the soul lusteth after; and that the eye may not be satisfied with seeing, nor the ear with hearing, nor the heart with desiring, new scenes of amusement, new modes of dissipation, are perpetually contriving, that the gratifications of *to-morrow may be as to-day, and much more abundant*. But, if hitherto we have been infatuated, and led astray by false views of happiness, it is now time to make a full stop in the journey of life, to consider where we are, and whither we are going.—To resume the allusion in the text, if we seek to *enter in at the*

*the strait gate, we must strive to do it: must not only contract our desires, but fix them upon proper objects—must give a new turn to our thoughts, reverse the wrong principles of action, and arm ourselves against whatever appears to be the reigning passion of our hearts.* Thus the wealthy must not so *trust in uncertain riches*, as to think *he shall never be cast down*—nor the ambitious be so dazzled with the splendour of honour and applause, as not to *seek that honour which cometh from God*. The revengeful also must not be so hurried away by passion, as to forget the condition on which his own trespasses are to be forgiven; nor the sensualist so entirely devoted to his pleasures, as to exclude himself from those *which are at God's right-hand for evermore*.

This perhaps will be thought a difficult and arduous task: but it is worthy of the man who would employ his reason to the noblest purpose, that of recovering its lost dominion over his passions; and still more worthy of the *Christian*, who would avail himself of the light his religion holds out to him, to *guide his feet into the way of peace*. But

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alas!

alas ! our retreat *from* wicked habits is much more slow than our advances *to* them. We take leave of our vices with the same pain and reluctance, as we do of the friend of our bosom, who has been long dear to us.—Pleasure, which often is only another name for vice ; or self-indulgence, which generally leads to every vice, has a strong attractive, but no repelling, power : so that they, who are once drawn within the sphere of its activity, must use more than common efforts in order to resist its force. The prophet supposes the difficulty of relinquishing evil habits to be great, and almost unsurmountable. *Can the Ethiopian change his skin, says he, or the leopard his spots ? then may they also do good, who have been accustomed to do evil.*\* Even the more merciful spirit of christianity allows the task to be attended with much pain and labour, but not exceeding our ability. The sinner may yet *enter in at the strait gate*, but he must *strive* to do it. Resolution inspired by a returning sense of virtue, and animated by the promised assistance of divine grace, may *pluck out* the corrupted eye

\* Jer. xiii. 23.

of lust, or *cut off* the right hand of iniquity. Painful operations! But the great physician of souls prescribes them: and we have only the choice of this alternative, that we must either part *with one of our members*; with that darling vice which is dear to us as a right-hand, or the *whole body* must perish.

Be not, however, discouraged at these difficulties in your first advances in the path of duty. Attempt them in earnest, with a fixed resolution, and every obstacle will soon be removed. Compare them with the labour and application necessary to attain to any high degree of intellectual, or mechanic perfection; and you will find that every thing is valuable and commendable, in proportion to the difficulty of the acquisition. Neglected and un-tilled, what will the richest soil produce, but thorns and thistles? But *do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?* Is there any useful art, any instructive science, that can be attained without much previous toil and diligence? Ask the learned, what pains and application he has taken to improve in knowledge.—Let the *mariner* recount what perils he has undergone in pursuit of gain—to what

severe discipline the *soldier* will submit from a sense of duty; and what desperate services he will readily go upon for the sake of rank and honour.—And shall *we* not exert the same fortitude of soul in our christian warfare? It is the Apostle that makes the comparison. Shall we not be animated with equal spirit, in fighting *the good fight of faith*?—The danger is less, the reward infinitely greater and more certain; and our engagements to the captain of our salvation equally sacred: having vowed to *fight manfully under his banners against sin, the world, and the devil*\*, those inveterate enemies of our happiness; and are assured that in all these conflicts we shall be *more than conquerors through him that loved us.*

After all, though these several instances of our duty imply the necessity of much diligence, temperance, and perseverance, in order to make a due progress in the way that leadeth unto life, yet christianity must not be charged with laying us under any unreasonable difficulties. It would be disinguing the

\* Office of Baptism.

very spirit and character of our religion to paint it as *always* dashing down the cup of self-enjoyment, and taking up the painful rod of discipline and correction. No! the Gospel nowhere forbids us a *moderate use* of any innocent gratifications,—and reason itself must disapprove the *abuse* of them. Accordingly the Apostle does not debar us from *using the world*, provided we do not *abuse it*; or become *lovers of pleasure, more than lovers of God*: Nor does the prophet denounce misery and woe upon the people of Jerusalem, for the polite refinements which had been introduced among them; or, as he expresses it, *because the harp and the viol, the tabret and pipe, and wine were in their feasts* \*: but because they were lost to all sense of religious obligation; *because*, says he, *they have cast away the law of the Lord of Hosts, and despise the word of the holy one of Israel*.—All immoderate indulgencies have, indeed, a natural tendency to produce the same insensibility, and neglect of virtue, among *any* people. This is a truth which has often been insisted on, and needs not now be proved; and there-

\* *Isaiah v. 12,*

fore I shall conclude with observing, that whoever is a true lover of his *country*, must also be a lover of *virtue*; and that whoever really loves himself, and has a regard to his happiness through the *whole* duration of his being, should daily endeavour to wean himself from an inordinate love of this world; and *so to pass through things temporal, that he finally lose not the things eternal.*

## SERMON XIII.

COMPASSION TO THE INFIRM AND SICK,  
RECOMMENDED ON THE MOTIVES, AND  
ENFORCED BY THE SANCTIONS OF THE  
GOSPEL.

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MATT. iv. 23.

*And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom; and healing all manner of sickness, and all manner of diseases among the people.*

THE office which our blessed Lord condescended to assume, when he first manifested himself to the world, was that of a teacher; and he was soon acknowledged to be a teacher sent from God; because, in the progress of his ministry, he did those works

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which *no man could do, except God were with him* \*.

To instruct the world in righteousness, and to redeem it from all iniquity, were, indeed, the great ends of Christ's mission: and, accordingly, the rules he laid down for the conduct of the *present* life, were clearly exemplified in his own practice; and that he had *the words of eternal life*, was confirmed by such amazing manifestations of his almighty power, as both awakened the attention, and convinced the understanding of the candid, unprejudiced, part of his hearers:—Or, if some of his followers were more attracted by the wonderful works that he did, than by the *gracious words that proceeded out of his mouth*; it was because conviction is sooner produced by the quick perceptions of *sense*, than by the slow deductions of *reason*. Even the most incredulous might well be struck with the effects of that miraculous power, which instantly enabled *the lame to walk, the deaf to hear, the blind to see, and the lepers to be cleansed* †.—The evidence resulting from such

\* John iii. 2.

† Luke vii. 22.

wonderful operations was, as it ought to be, clear and satisfactory.—That it *was so*, is proved from the testimony of the Evangelist; who, in the verse that follows the text, has recorded that *his fame went throughout all Syria, where they brought unto him all sick people that were taken with divers diseases and torments, and he healed them,*

To listen to advice, to benefit by instruction, and to be thankful for relief in the moment of distress, is the part of a generous and grateful mind.—In this disposition was the vast concourse of people that had flocked about our Lord from various parts. Many of them had felt the healing influence of his divine power—many more had seen the effects, and all had heard the report of it. He therefore seized so favourable an opportunity of impressing the multitude with the same just sentiments of the doctrine he came to teach, as they had already conceived of the astonishing cures he had performed; for it is recorded in the text, that *Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing*

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*ing all manner of sickness, and all manner of diseases among the people.*

In this, and every other instance of human duty, our divine Master hath left us an example that we should follow his steps—not, indeed, to the same extent, but, as far as we are able, on the same benevolent principle. His power and goodness were infinite,—ours are limited and imperfect:—all nature was obedient to his will.—*He spake the word, and men were loosed from their infirmities.*—We can only hope, that his blessing on our endeavours may have a similar effect. Yet, in conformity to his example, we are to do all the good we can, both to the souls and bodies of our fellow-creatures. Hence the clergy are bound to instruct, exhort, and admonish—the laity to attend, believe, and practise: and, both clergy and laity, to give public, as well as private proofs of their faith, by their charity and good works.

Numerous, indeed, are the calls upon us all for our assistance to remove, or at least alleviate, human misery!—This, in one shape or other, is perpetually presenting itself to our views,

views, and imploring our compassion ! some becoming destitute and wretched for want of timely care and discipline : others from the natural consequences of their own folly and perverseness : many from unavoidable and unforeseen misfortunes ; from lingering diseases, and disabling accidents : and not a few who are reduced to groan under this accumulated weight of wretchedness—a burthen too heavy for human nature to bear, were it not for those sympathetic feelings—those *bowels of compassion*, which the Father of mercies hath implanted in us, and which excited by religious motives, incline the good and virtuous part of mankind *to weep with them that weep*, and to take a friendly part in the various calamities to which our common nature is subject.

On this christian principle, a religious disposition will manifest itself in different ways, according to the peculiar circumstances of the case, for to produce the fruits of many virtues, it will cultivate the nature and spirit of all.—Thus when benevolence interposes to redress the wrongs done to others, it is *justice* ; when in bearing those done to ourselves it is *patience*—in comforting the afflicted it is

*humani-*

humanity—in reclaiming the profligate it is piety: but, in giving alms of our goods, whether it be to clothe the naked, to instruct the ignorant, to heal the sick, or to cure the wounded and sore smitten, it is emphatically distinguished by the name of *Charity*.

I need not, in this christian audience, enforce the observance of this particular branch of duty, on considerations drawn from the natural relation which the rich and poor bear to each other as *men*; nor from the mutual advantages resulting from it as *members of society*.—It is sufficient to rest the obligation upon those powerful and affecting motives, that are laid in the sanctions of the gospel;—all tending to inspire us with that divine philanthropy—that heavenly temper of benevolence and mutual kindness, which form the distinguishing character of our holy religion, and will ever prove the best support of it.

How powerfully this divine principle operated in the first ages of christianity is well known. It was so far the comfort and support of its professors of all ranks, that an apostate,

apostate, persecuting emperor \*, struck with the force of their friendly and charitable disposition, could not help crying out, as if to reproach the inhumanity of his pagan subjects—“ See how these christians love one another !”

If the complexion of the present time appears to be of a darker cast; if, on the one hand, the temper of fellow-christians and fellow-subjects, embroiled by political contention, seems less disposed to give proofs of that *faith* which *worketh by love*—and, on the other, the misfortunes and distresses of many, and the too fashionable dissipation of all, have contracted the current of benevolence within narrower bounds,—we will nevertheless hope, for *charity hopeth all things*, and *endureth all things*, that these waters of comfort will again fill their wonted channel, refresh the weary, and restore the infirm and sick to health and labour.

For surely it would be a most pitiable case to see, what I trust we never shall see, the

\* Julian.

many

many commodious, and even elegant structures that, of late years, have been erected by the public liberality, for the accommodation and cure of our distressed fellow-creatures, either falling to decay, or unable to receive the usual number of patients, by the contributions being diminished, that were necessary to their support. But from whatever cause those contributions may have been suspended, they will never be suppressed; for the Apostle hath assured us, that *charity never faileth*; and humanity, which is one main branch of it, is so natural to the British soil, and hath born so much good fruit amongst us, especially in these united cities, that it is almost difficult to enumerate our several charitable institutions, or point out any one malady or distress, but what they are designed to relieve. Hence it is, that the utmost efforts of human ability are generously exerted to *heal every sickness, and every disease among the people*.—Hence also deserted children and orphans are taken in and provided for—the naked clothed—the poor youth of both sexes maintained and educated—the debts of industrious artificers discharged—the manners of repenting prostitutes corrected—

women

women in the peril of childbirth *delivered*—the havock formerly made by a *contagious distemper* prevented—and all treated with such compassionate attention, such skilful assiduity, as if the only contention amongst us were, (and may it ever be the only one) who should be most *zealous of good works*.

It is an acknowledgment justly due to the humanity of the present age, thus to mention, though but briefly, the liberal provision that has been made for the various distresses of our fellow-creatures in this capital of the British Empire—and having said this, you will allow me to add, that the Westminster Infirmary was not only the first of the kind, but long the most flourishing. Had it still continued so, there had been no occasion for this particular address upon the subject. For never, until now, have the respectable trustees of this charity implored your aid and benevolence in this holy place; because never until now have they been reduced to that sad necessity.—But so it is, that this most ancient and well conducted charity, after having long enjoyed the approbation, and been supported by the liberality of its benefactors, begins

begins to feel a sensible diminution in the means of that support—its barrel of meal begins to waste, and its cuse of oil to fail. Already have the necessary disbursements so far exceeded the annual benefactions and contributions, that the trustees have been constrained to dispose of a large part of their capital stock, which must increase their necessities, in proportion to the annual interest lost upon it: and, what is still more affecting to them and every benevolent mind, they have, notwithstanding all this, been reduced to the painful necessity of totally shutting up one of their sick wards; though with as much heart-felt sorrow to themselves, as to the poor disappointed patients, who cannot be admitted.

In this pitiable situation, all that can be done, until they shall be further enabled, is to select, out of many, those cases that, in the judgment of the physicians, appear to be the most urgent, in order that the progress of the disease may receive a timely check, or that the bones which were broken may rejoice: whilst they, whose condition is less desperate, are not sent away empty, but are kindly supplied with

with advice and medicines that may palliate, if not heal their sickness; and all are encouraged to hope for admission on some future day.

To realize these hopes may be in our power, and, I trust, in our inclination. For in this populous city, where, if *many receive their good things*, *many likewise receive their evil things*, a variety of causes concur to multiply applications, and to lay the poor at our gates full of sores. Sickness indeed, and pains, and accidents, are the *common*, though not always the *equal* lot of rich and poor! But how great a disparity is there in the circumstances of their condition? The rich can always procure the aid of art and the medicine to relieve, a round of amusements to divert, and the attendance of friends to sooth their pains;—pains that are often produced from their very pleasures! —Far otherwise it is with the poor industrious sufferer! Ever patient of the extremes of heat and cold, he is glad, if by his *daily labour*, he can earn his *daily bread*: until, by over-straining his active powers, or engaging in some hazardous attempt, or exposing his

heated body to some malignant blast, he loses both the appetite to eat, and the ability to procure a scanty sustenance for his needy family.

Thus feeble and *sore smitten, and roaring for the very disquietness of his heart,* whither can he go for succour but to this, or some of the other charitable receptacles, which are so many pleasing proofs of the opulence, the humanity, and I will humbly hope, of the piety likewise of this great city? In this view, what a pleasing reflection must it afford to all who contribute to support the Infirmary, for which I am here an advocate, to be assured, that upwards of one hundred and four thousand poor patients, have since its first institution, been *loosed from their infirmities,* and restored to their families and the public service?

It might seem invidious to state the comparative benefits of this and other hospitals—as they all sprung from the same root of christian benevolence, and are all known by the same lovely fruits. If ours hath produced them

them in greater abundance, it may be from its being earlier planted in a fresh soil, where it took a deeper root; and, by the blessing of God, hath preserved its fertility for upwards of sixty years.—Let it not, then, I beseech you, my brethren, be suffered to droop and decline through your inattention, or that of the richer and more populous parishes in the neighbourhood.—Represent to them how greatly their justice, their humanity, their interest are concerned in its support.—Remind them of the considerable saving it makes in their parochial rates, both by the temporary *maintenance*, and the effectual *cure* of the miserable objects that would otherwise prove a much heavier burthen.—But true benevolence despairs all selfish motives—let me then rather apply to your natural feelings as *men*, and to your religious obligations as *christians*.—Our happiness as men is comparative: and who is there amongst us who doth not think *himself* happy to have escaped the lingering illnesses, the acute diseases, and excruciating pains with which the poor patients in our Infirmary are so grievously afflicted? or, if such hath been our lot, for

none can claim an exemption, that we are not destitute of the means of procuring relief?

But, is it enough for us to thank God that we are not as other men are, or even as those unfortunate objects, without contributing something of our abundance to better their condition?—Shall we withhold good from them to whom it is due, when it is in the power of our hand to do it \*? God forbid! Our common christianity prescribes a different rule.—The blessed Author of it bids us be merciful as our Father in heaven is merciful—assures us, that he will account the kindness we shew to our distressed brethren as done to himself; and his great Apostle charges them, who are rich in this world's goods, that they be ready to give, and glad to distribute, laying up in store for themselves a good foundation, that they may attain eternal life †.—And,

As to the rest, let every one, as the same Apostle advises, do, according as he is disposed

\* Prov. iii. 27.

† 1 Tim. vi. 18.

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in his heart; not grudgingly, or of necessity, for God loveth a cheerful giver: \*—so will the blessing of them that are ready to perish come upon us †! And so may our prayers and our alms, which we now join together, go up for a memorial before God ‡, and bring an angel down to succour us, at that awful hour, when neither riches will profit, nor power protect us, unless we shall have been rich towards God, and in good works.

\* 2 Cor. ix. 7.

† Job xxiii. 19.

‡ Acts x. 4.

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## SERMON XIV.

THE CONNEXION OF RELIGION AND  
MORALITY.

TITUS ii. 11, 12.

*The grace of God which bringeth salvation, hath appeared to all men ; teaching us, that denying ungodliness, and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world.*

AS morality and religion are inseparably connected in the nature of things, so the sacred writers are every where reminding us of that connexion ; and enforcing the duties that arise from it, in a variety of plain, comprehensive, and useful precepts. In proof of this, we need only refer to the epistle now mentioned ; which, in a very narrow compass, contains so many, and those such pro-

proper, directions for the main points of human conduct, that as long as modesty is amiable in youth, or gravity is venerable in the aged—as long as fidelity is commendable in servants; loyalty is praise-worthy in subjects; and *sobriety, justice, and piety* are lovely and of good report among all degrees of men—so long will this epistle be of use in forming their manners, and disposing their affections, to the performance of these several duties.

Even the text itself may be said to include the whole of what the divine *Author and finisher of our faith* hath proposed to mankind, as a fixed and permanent rule of conduct, and as the reasonable terms of their acceptance with God. St. Paul, therefore, in the former part of the text, very properly defines the gospel covenant to be a manifestation of the grace, or favour of God which bringeth *salvation to all men*: the merciful conditions which it offers, and the hopes of a blessed immortality assured to the observance of them, being neither limited to one peculiar people, nor withheld from any; but graciously intended to be as universal in their extent, and as beneficial in their influence on the moral world.

world, as the sun itself, the usual emblem of the christian revelation, is on the natural world.—But as the whole of this subject is of too great extent to be comprised within the limits of one discourse, I shall therefore pass over the speculative part, that I may enlarge upon the practical use and intent of the doctrine contained in it; and shew how clearly it teacheth us to pursue the wise ends for which we are sent into the *present world*, by endeavouring to render our conduct *comfortable* to ourselves, *beneficial* to society, and *acceptable* to God.—Accordingly we are instructed in the text, 1st, That we should acquire a proper government of our passions and affections—for christianity teacheth us to *live soberly*.—2dly, That we should render to every man what is justly due to him: for it teacheth us to *live righteously*;—and, lastly, that we should cultivate an habitual sense of *piety and religion*; for it likewise teacheth us to *live godly in this present world*.

In this manner does the divine institution of the gospel, connect and combine the three great principles implanted in our moral, our social, and religious nature; and direct their united

united force to secure both our present and future happiness,

I. If then we take them in the order in which they are placed, the first object of our attention is that we should live *soberly*; or as the original word imports, *prudently*, or *discreetly*. A rule of conduct, which, abstracted from its divine authority, is laid in the very frame and constitution of our nature; and, if no wrong bias were put upon our affections, would constantly take its direction from that noble faculty of reason, by which mankind are eminently distinguished from every species of animal beings.—*They* indeed, in common with us, have senses to be pleased, appetites to be gratified, and passions to be indulged: but *we* are happily endowed, (happily if we make a proper use of them) with the exclusive privilege of a moral sense; with liberty to choose; with judgment to discern, and understanding to direct us in the path of duty. When therefore the inferior faculties of our nature are held in a due dependence on our rational powers; when every appetite seeks only a moderate indulgence, and each passion is directed to its suitable object; when

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there is no licentious abuse of the one, nor any inordinate gratification of the other, we then act agreeably to the instructions of religion, and the obligations of our moral nature: and may justly be said to lead a *sober*, because we lead a *rational life*.

As this may serve to give a general idea of *sobriety*, or that self-government, which forms a considerable branch of moral conduct; so there are many particular virtues comprised under the gospel sense of *living soberly*, not less conducive to the good order of society, and the happiness of individuals, than their opposite qualities are subversive of both. Thus, when the scripture prescribes temperance to the voluptuous; chastity to the libertine; forbearance to the passionate, and moderation to the zealot—or when it recommends humility to the proud, contentment to the selfish, or benevolence to the envious; the application is still made to their reasonable nature; from whence arises that principle of sobriety, which, if properly directed, would of itself produce *all* these virtuous dispositions.

Why

Why then is *religion* charged with encroaching upon the rights and privileges of our nature? or because it regulates the manner, and adjusts the proportion of our sensual indulgences, that therefore it means to root out those affections and appetites that a gracious Creator hath implanted in us?—For if religion allows a moderate pursuit and enjoyment of the good things of life, should reason itself do more? But, when the bounds of moderation are transgressed, and reason is carried away captive by our passions, then, indeed, religion offers its friendly aid; calls in its powerful sanctions to our assistance; excites and animates our rational powers to assert their moral *liberty*, to shake off the shackles of vice, and to be no longer entangled in its *yoke of bondage*!—And how many illustrious instances doth the history of our religion contain—some perhaps our own experience points out to us, of men, who had been for some time *led away by divers lusts and pleasures*; but, by a noble fortitude of mind, have rescued themselves from the *bondage of corruption* into the glorious *liberty of the sons of God*\*!—Ask, now, the man, who

\* Rom. ix. 21.

hath

hath happily accomplished *this* revolution in his moral state, whether he would part with that inward peace and complacency of mind, which spring from the well ordered government of his passions, in exchange for all the sensual enjoyments that his heart *once* lusted after? and he will tell you, that he now draws his pleasures from the purer source of sobriety and temperance; and feels a more solid satisfaction in discharging his religious and social duties, than when he evaded the obligation of every duty, but that of doing the daily drudgery of vice and folly. For while he *continued* in *sin*, he was the *servant* of *sin*; a slave to his appetites, because in rebellion against his reason. But now, *being* made free from *sin*, and become the *servant* of *God*, he *bath* his *fruit* unto *holiness*, and the end he aims at—*everlasting life* \*.

It may appear somewhat hard to assert, that intemperance in general is more prevalent in the present than at other times; and charity, which *hopeth all things*, should incline us to a more favourable opinion. Perhaps it may be nearer the truth, to suppose, that the

\* Rom. vi. 22.

immoral

immoral tendency of some modes of intemperance are too much overlooked; and that the mind is not sufficiently fortified against them at a time of life when sound principles of order and sobriety should be impressed upon it. Now when this discipline is neglected, or too early remitted, is it to be wondered, that the passions should take the lead of reason, and hurry men into the most ruinous and destructive gratifications? Is it to be wondered that impure desires solicit and are gratified; and that the pursuit of a lawless passion shall either fix an aversion to conjugal union, or embitter all the joys of it?—Is it to be wondered, that *when the wine sheweth itself in the cup*, it is repeated to excess? till their very *table*, in the full sense of the psalmist's expression, is made *a snare to them*? Or, that the high elegancies of a luxurious board furnish new incentives to new desires; and, as it is written, *the people set down to eat and drink, and rise up to play?*—Is it to be wondered, that luxury should produce covetousness as the only means to support it! and that covetousness should hope to find its account in the fortunate chances, perhaps in the artful practices, of extravagant and unlawful

lawful gaming?—A strange phrensy of the mind, that often proves fatal to the peace, the dignity, and happiness of the great themselves!—But, when the ruinous example descends to the lower ranks, it seldom fails, for the time at least, to banish all sense of domestic and social duty—every sentiment of humanity, justice, and probity!—instead of which, secret fraud, and mutual distrust are avowed and maintained by foul abuse, and horrid imprecation! till nothing is left of the *reasonable* creature; scarce the external form itself; so hideously is it disfigured, according as *anxiety*, *disappointment*, or *despair*, alternately seize the *unfortunate* adventurer!—whereas all excess in these and other points of licentious conduct, would be effectually restrained by that self-government which is implied in *living soberly*; if our reason, understanding, and judgment, which should all be retained on the side of sobriety, were not too often exerted in the cause of indulgence; powerfully pleading in behalf of some favourite passion; and addressing the mind, as Lot did the angel for the place of his retreat—*is it not a little one?* Indulge thyself in this, and thy *soul shall live!*—But in fact, the progress

gress from such little inclinations to the most *criminal* pursuits, is by no means uncommon; for when once the heart is *softened* with pleasure, it will easily take the *impression* of sin; in which case, as reason and conscience cannot at once be silenced, there may be no way left to stifle the uneasy reflections on one vicious gratification, but by the quick succession of another. And that, not only with a view to *enjoy* pleasure, but to *avoid* pain;—that worst of pains which proceeds from a *wounded spirit*! and thus pleasures may be pursued, till they become as necessary to the profligate, as lights in the night are to those who are troubled in mind; not so much to promote their repose, as to divert the horror of darkness, the parent of remorse, and a most unpleasing sensation to a guilty conscience.

Now to stop the fatal progress of such pursuits, the scripture every where cautions us to be upon our guard against the allurements of our sensual appetites—against *ungodliness and worldly lusts*, that *war against the soul*, and are the declared enemies of our spiritual safety; teaching us, what was never clearly taught before, that we are here placed

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in a state of *discipline* and trial of our virtue; and therefore ought to be duly prepared and fortified, against any surprise that may for ever determine our condition. And hence we are forewarned, in very affecting terms, to *take heed, lest, at any time, our hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and the cares of this world; and so that day come upon us unawares* \*.

II. With this caution upon our minds, let us proceed to the next step we are to make in the path of duty, which is to live *righteously*. A term, that, in different parts of scripture, hath different significations—but whenever it is used in contradistinction to other virtues or topics of discourse, as in the reasoning of St. Paul before Felix, and here in the text, the meaning is usually confined to the particular virtue of *justice*.

To live *righteously* then, in this sense of the word, is to be actuated by a constant attention to the duties of equity, fidelity, and honesty,—nay, of benevolence also and charity. For the very spirit of this virtue con-

\* Luke xxi. 34.

fists, according to the Apostle's definition, in rendering to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute; fear to whom fear; honor to whom honor \*.—These several obligations are to be punctually discharged; and we are to owe no man any thing, but the common debt of humanity, to love one another; a debt which though daily paid, must nevertheless be daily contracted; as no man is sufficient enough for his own happiness, without borrowing some aid and assistance from another:—just as no single part of the great system of nature, could support and uphold itself, independently of the whole, and of other parts. The rule of justice too is delivered in that universal language of our moral nature, which speaks as intelligibly to the unlettered Indian that roameth through the deserts, as to the most refined philosopher that walketh in his portico: clearly instructing both in the equity of that divine precept, of *doing to others whatsoever they could wish that others should do unto them.*

This duty then is so reciprocal, that no accidental difference of fortune, rank, or

\* Rom. xiii. 17.

power,

power, should cancel the obligation—no circumstance of distance, time, or place, should weaken or destroy its force. It forms that extensive chain of commerce, which reacheth from one end of the earth even to the other—Now, if the nature and extent of this duty be so universally known—if it be *written*, as it were, on our hearts, *by the finger of God*, so that no excuse can be left for ignorance, none for inability to practise it;—to what shall we ascribe those frequent violations of justice that we daily hear of? *Come they not hence*, as the Apostle saith, *even from our lusts*? from the ungovernable desires of human nature, unrestrained by reason! unawed by authority! *Hence* that secret fraud, or open violence, to which the unprincipled mind is prompted, whenever the competent means of life are wasted through extravagance, or its superfluities coveted through ostentation or avarice! For except the desires of men be restrained by *sobriety*, their actions will not always be regulated by *justice*. Human laws may, indeed, determine the bounds of right and wrong with exact precision; and human penalties may enforce their operation; yet as these necessary provisions for the peace and

good order of society presuppose the depravity of mankind ; so, in many cases, they will be found ineffectual to correct it : especially where bad men are either *artful* enough to elude the eye of justice, or *desperate* enough to despise its punishments. And therefore, lest the duties of sobriety and righteousness, which are so conducive to personal and social happiness, should be insufficient of themselves to these good purposes ; they are, in the last place, enforced by the sanctions of religion, implied by living *godly in this present world*.

III. Here, then, christianity gives the motives to a rational and upright conduct their full weight, by superadding the laws of the divine administration to the regulations of human policy ; and teaching us that *we must needs be subject* to those regulations, *not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake*.—Thus extending the consequences of our actions, beyond this transitory scene, to a state of eternal duration ; we are thence led to consider the supreme Governor of the universe, as the watchful *observer* of our conduct here, and the just *rewarder* of it hereafter—to consider ourselves as created by his *power*, dependent

pendent on his *providence*, and accountable to his *justice*: so that to live *soberly*, *righteously*, and *godly*, must be our duty in this *present world*; because a course of intemperance, injustice, and impiety, offer nothing but a fearful looking-for of judgment, and can leave no hopes of happiness in that which is to come,

From these considerations, a sober mind will naturally acquire such a lively sense of the religious principle, as will always operate in proportion as we attend to its direction: and, although amidst the follies and dissipations of life, it may often be suspended, and for *some* time suppressed; yet will it never be totally extinguished; because our moral feelings, and a consciousness of our conduct, are inseparable from our nature; and will not fail to attend us to that different state of being, where the hopes of the righteous shall have their full fruition of promised felicity; and the fears of the wicked experience the sad reality of misery and torment.

To close what hath been said in a few words,—the christian plan of duty, as delineated in the gospel, sets before us all the

motives to the observance of it that can engage the affections ; every sanction that can influence the passions of human nature—equally adapted to the different tempers, dispositions, and situations of men, to the rich and poor, the learned and unlearned ;—its rules have an invariable tendency to promote and secure both the happiness of individuals, and the welfare of society.—If some minds are allured to virtue by its natural charms, what can be more amiable than to *live soberly*? If others are actuated by a regard to the social principle ; what can be more consistent with it than to *live righteously*? so that if those be disposed to practise *whatsoever things are lovely* ; and *these* whatsoever is honest and of good report, a due attention to a *religious* and *godly life* will not only strengthen and confirm these virtuous dispositions ; but, by teaching us how to attain the perfection of our reasonable nature, under gracious allowances for our infirmities, will render us fit to be partakers of a glorious immortality, through faith in his merits, who *gave himself for us*, *that he might redeem us from all iniquity*, and *purify unto himself a peculiar people zealous of good works* \*.

\* Titus ii. 14.

## SERMON XV.

THE CREDIBILITY OF THE RESURRECTION  
SHEWN FROM THE PROPHETS.

ACTS xxvi. 6.

*Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you that God should raise the dead?*

THERE were no articles of our holy faith which the apostles and first teachers of christianity more laboured to establish; or that more exposed them to the contempt of the wise, and persecution of the powerful, than those of the *crucifixion* and *resurrection* of Christ. And yet the severe treatment they met with on this account, was only what their divine Master had prepared them to expect,—*Ye shall be hated*, said he, *of all men for my name's sake* \*; and shall

\* Matt. x. 22.

*be brought before governors, and kings, for a testimony \* against them and the Gentiles.— Precisely in this situation, before the august tribunal of Pontius *Festus* the Roman governor, and his royal guests *Agrippa* and *Bernice*, did the apostle Paul stand to be judged, for teaching the doctrine of eternal life after death, through the merits of a crucified Redeemer.*

*But was this the man who, so lately, had breathed out threatenings and slaughters against the christian converts ; and who, to use his own language, was exceedingly mad against them ; and persecuted them even unto strange cities ?—Whence was it, that he, of all men, should at once become a zealous advocate for the very cause he had so furiously opposed ; and himself as ready to suffer persecution for the cross of Christ, as he had lately been to inflict it on others ?*

*This, surely, cannot be imputed to any of the ordinary motives that influence the mind—not to motives of interest or resentment—of ambition, or vain-glory. How much so-*

\* Mark xiii. 9.

ever

ever any, or all, such principles might have led him to solicit the *authority and commission* he was to have executed against the *disciples at Damascus*, the miraculous cause of his conversion that befel him in the way thither, inspired him with very different sentiments—taught him the christian virtues of meekness and humility, moderation and forbearance, benevolence and charity—disposed him to sacrifice every temporal advantage—to *suffer the loss of all things* (and what did he not suffer,) that he might promote the saving knowledge of *Christ crucified*, and be a *partaker of his resurrection*.

Well therefore might Agrippa be desirous to hear what this extraordinary person had to offer in defence of his new doctrine: while the Apostle, who knew the king *to be expert* in all the questions that were agitated in the Jewish schools, thought himself happy in so illustrious an audience to hear his defence of it. And he *did* defend it in so decent, respectful, and animated a manner, that, short as his apology was, it nevertheless affords a convincing proof, how truly the promise of our Saviour to his disciples was fulfilled, that  
upon

upon all such trying occasions, he would give them *a mouth and wisdom, which their adversaries should not be able to gainsay* \*. With this divine support did St. Paul now stand to be judged, and to impress upon his audience the following truths :

1st, That *Jesus of Nazareth*, whom the Jews had crucified and slain, was the very Christ, or Messiah, whom God had promised to their fathers by the prophets : and,

2dly, That, after his crucifixion, he had, according to the same prophets, *risen from the dead*.

I. And first, That Jesus, who assumed to be the promised Messiah, had been put to death, was a well-known fact which needed no proof : but that he was the *true Messiah*, and had risen from the dead, were the great points the Apostle had to establish ; for, if the dead rise not at all, if that was a thing impossible, then was not Christ risen : and if

\* Luke xxi. 15.

Christ was not risen, *he could not be the true Messiah.*

St. Paul therefore, without insisting much on his own testimony, rests the proof of this main article upon an authority which *king Agrippa* himself acknowledged; and, on a fair presumption, that he, and all the Jews who heard him, believed the sacred writings, he could neither conceive why they should either reject a suffering Messiah, or deem it a *thing incredible that God should raise the dead.* — That, for his own part, he had thought himself obliged, consistently with his principles before his conversion, to do *many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth*; but that even now, after the particular revelations vouchsafed him, he advanced no doctrine, nor maintained any opinion but what was expressly founded on *Moses and the prophets*; who had repeatedly foretold, *that Christ should suffer; and be the first who should rise from the dead.*

On this sure word of prophecy, and on the veracity of their own testimony, supported by miracles, confirmed by their sufferings, and sealed

sealed with their blood, did the apostles and first teachers of christianity, rest the proofs of these fundamental articles!—And with their Jewish adversaries, who admitted the truth of the prophetic books; and, at that time, were in full expectation of the promised Messiah, every argument, thence drawn, was a direct appeal to their own *principles*.

But the main source of their *incredulity*, and a fatal one it was, sprang from perverting the true spirit and meaning of the prophecies, and from the wrong ideas they had formed of the condition and character in which the Messiah was *expected* to appear.

Dazzled with the splendor of those images that displayed the glories of Christ's spiritual kingdom, they overlooked such as described his coming in a state of poverty and humiliation—as *despised and rejected*,—as *wounded for our transgressions*, and *bruised for our iniquities*\*;—and, what marked his character still more, as *swallowing up death in victory*†.

\* Isaiah liii. 5.

† Ibid. xxv. 8.

Had the Jews impartially considered these, and many other designations, clearly discoverable in the corresponding circumstances of our Saviour's character, and had not through their obstinacy, been given up to a judicial blindness, they could no more have resisted the evidence for his being the Messiah that *was to come*, than have thought it *incredible* that he should rise from the dead.

Besides, their attention was, or ought to have been sufficiently awakened by those miraculous powers which the prophets had appropriated to Christ in a singular manner; and which, with a most compassionate tenderness he was ever ready to exert, during the short time he was permitted to live among them. They saw, how, at his word, *the lepers were cleansed, the lame walked, the deaf heard, the blind received their sight, and the dead were restored to life.* They saw, but would not believe! other prophets, they knew, had been sent to their fathers with similar credentials; and therefore they still looked for another: but had any other foretold, with equal precision, the time and manner of his death, and when he should rise from

from the dead? He only who was *more than a prophet* foretold both.—*The son of man*, said he, *shall be betrayed unto the chief priests and scribes; and they shall condemn him to death, and deliver him to the Gentiles to mock, and to scourge, and to crucify him; and the third day he shall rise again*\*.

How literally all this was accomplished, with what insulting cruelty our blessed Lord was treated, and in what an ignominious manner he was made to suffer, the enemies of the christian name from that time to this have told with pleasure: but they leave others to tell how all nature bore testimony to his divinity when he did suffer!—How the *earth shook*, the *rocks were rent*, and the sun, at noon day, withheld its light, and was veiled in darkness.—They leave it to the astonished Centurion, and the few unprejudiced spectators at the crucifixion, to feel the force of those miraculous attestations—to smite upon their breasts, and say, *verily this was the son of God!*

\* Matt. xxvii. 18, 19.

And

And yet the most convincing proof, that he *was* the Son of God, still remained to be exhibited—that he might reconcile the *creature* to the offended *Creator*, he had submitted to *die for our sins*, and to give *his life a ransom for many*.—But it was his *resurrection* only that could give sufficient evidence of the efficacy of his death, and confirm the hopes of his faithful followers. For had Christ died the *common death of all men*; or, had God *left his body in the grave*, and suffered his *holy one to see corruption, infidelity* then might have triumphed over *faith*; and we should have had no sure ground to believe that Christ had purchased eternal redemption for us.—All would have remained dark and doubtful—no certainty of any thing beyond the grave—no assurance of a blessed immortality! But the conditions of that everlasting covenant for which he voluntarily engaged as the great representative of human nature, being duly performed, *death had no more dominion over him*:—Divine justice accepted the atonement, and he, who was *delivered for our offences, rose again for our justification*.

On

On these principles did St. Paul rest his apology for the faith he had embraced in the covenanted mercies of God, and the propitiatory sacrifice of Christ.—But in this covenant of grace, was nothing to be performed on the part of man? Does it free us from all, or any, obligation to virtuous conduct? and may we continue in *sin*, that *grace* may abound?—Do the most valuable privileges of our nature still consist in gratifying our sensual appetites, and pursuing the means of acquiring the power or riches and honours of this world?—Far otherwise! all these attainments are only relative to the present state of *things*: if these form the distinctions of this life, they also form the trials of it: but the eternal distinctions of condition will be adjudged, not according to the present disparity of rank and station, (for God is no respecter of persons) but according to the degrees of virtue that support and adorn them.

Let us, then, ever remember, and act as if we *did* remember, that, as God is merciful, he is likewise just.—He could not more strongly declare his indignation at *sin*, than by the infinite satisfaction demanded, and given

for it: but, to render even that satisfaction complete and available, the repentance and faith of the *sinner* must be added to the sacrifice and death of the *Redeemer*.

These are the declared conditions of the gospel-covenant.—But, if we continue to sin *wilfully*, after a perfect knowledge of such conditions, *there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin; but a certain fearful looking-for of judgment, and fiery indignation which shall devour the adversaries* \*.

May this knowledge make us wise unto salvation; producing in us a stedfast and lively faith, adorned with the practice of every social and christian virtue: that *when Christ, who is our life, shall appear, we also may appear with him in glory* †.

\* Heb. x. 11.

† Col. iii. 4.

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Continued from page 259  
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## SERMON XVI.

ANXIETY PAINFUL AND INEFFECTUAL.

LUKE xii. 25.

*And which of you with taking thought, can add to his stature one cubit?*

THE question before us refers to one of those particular incidents, which our divine teacher never failed of applying to the great purposes of religion and virtue; and therefore it will be necessary to review the passage with which it is connected, in order to state the meaning,—to explain the terms—and to profit from the instruction intended by it.

We read in the preceding verses, that *one of the company* who, like many others, mistook both the nature and end of our Saviour's

office, who appears to have followed him more with a view to his temporal than his spiritual interests, addressed himself to him and said, *Master, speak to my brother that he divide the inheritance with me.*—To interpose his authority in a case of that kind, was no part of our Saviour's office.—*His kingdom was not of this world:* and accordingly he replied with some degree of resentment, *Man! who who made me a judge or a divider over you?*—When immediately directing himself to those about him, he takes occasion, from this incident, to advise them to *take heed and beware of covetousness:* and he enforces the advice with the following reason—*for a man's life, either as to its happiness or duration, consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.* But, lest the reason alone should not be sufficiently attended to, he proceeds to illustrate the truth of it, by a parable of *a certain rich man, whose grounds brought forth so plentifully, that he was for some time in great perplexity how to make room for bestowing his vast increase.* Resolved, at last, *to pull down his barns and build greater;* the very thought suggested such a train of pleasing ideas, that he began to anticipate his enjoyments;

ments; and to solace himself with an endless round of pleasures that were in store for him. He could not even contain himself from breaking out into the most rapturous expressions, and saying to his *soul*, in the very language of epicurism; *Soul! thou hast much goods laid up for many years! take thine ease: eat, drink, and be merry.*—But, whilst he was thus presumptuously measuring the length of his life by the greatness of his possessions; God is introduced as saying unto him, *Thou fool*—i. e. thou impious man, (for impiety and folly are here the same) *this night shall thy soul be required of thee!* and *then whose shall those things be which thou hast provided?*—The moral which follows, is delivered in general terms. *So is he*, saith our Saviour, in such a dangerous state is every one, *that layeth up treasures for himself, and is not rich towards God.*

A parable, concluded in this awful and solemn manner, could scarce fail of making some impression on the most selfish and covetous minds. They had *before* seen how anxious and uneasy one man was for a share of his father's inheritance which he could not

R 3 obtain:

obtain: they were *now* told how suddenly another was cut off from the fond hopes of enjoying the immense treasure that he *had* obtained. And were not these instances sufficient to establish the truth of the observation, that the continuance of a *man's life* depends not on the *abundance* of his *possessions*? — Could they possibly be so foolish, so impious rather, as to presume that their only concern was to provide for the present state, or that the more thoughtful and solicitous they were for the means of indulging life, the longer they should enjoy it? — If such was their presumption, our blessed Lord exposed the folly of it in the strongest terms by putting the question in the text — *Which of you, said he, with taking thought, can add to his stature one cubit?* By taking thought is here meant, that eager and restless agitation which the mind suffers, after it hath fixed upon the end, but is distracted about the means: so that the whole verse may be rendered thus — *Who among you, with all his care and anxiety, can prolong his life for one hour?* — The question, indeed, in either sense implies an impossibility, as no man has it in his power to make his life longer, nor his person

person taller. But it plainly refers to the folly and impiety of the rich man's conduct, who never once thought of meriting the protection of God by a charitable and proper use of what *his* bounty had bestowed upon him. All he wished for was, length of life, because he had *much goods laid up for many years'* enjoyment, to which any addition to his stature would contribute nothing. Besides, the original word for size, or stature, signifies likewise *age* \*; and, in some parts of scripture, is so translated. The measures of *space* too, are with the sacred writers frequently used for those of *time* †; and as the eastern people were much given to proverbial and figurative expressions, this of adding one cubit to their age, or stature, might, perhaps, be used to point out the folly of desiring what it was impossible to obtain. But, whatever may be the precise meaning of the terms in this question, we cannot possibly mistake our Saviour's intention by it; so clearly does he instruct his hearers, how little all their care and

\* ἡλικία used in John ix. 21, 23. Heb. xi. 11. in the sense of age.

† See Hammond's note on Psalm xxxix. 5. See also Heylyn's Theological Lectures, vol. i. p. 130.

anxiety can secure even their present happiness, without that religious trust and dependence which all accountable beings should have on the power and providence of God. It is on this principle, that the divine Teacher enforces the inference which he drew from the preceding parable. *Therefore I say unto you, take no thought, be not anxious for your life, what ye shall eat, nor yet for the body what ye shall put on.* — But lest they should be offended at the seeming severity of this injunction, he condescends to reason with them upon it. For, consider with yourselves — Did you not derive your very being from the power and goodness of God? and will you not rely on the same goodness for your well-being? for is not life a more valuable gift than meat, and the body than raiment? Look around you, and observe how his fatherly care extends to every thing he hath made, to the whole vegetable and animal kinds, — to the fowls of the air and the *lillies* of the field. You see how beautifully he hath clothed the one, and how plentifully he feeds the other. — And yet these neither sow nor reap; nor have they *store house* or barns, as the rich man had. Now if God so feedeth them, which, in comparison, are

but creatures of a day, shall be not much more provide for you, whom he hath created for immortality?—After all this should ye still have so little faith as to disquiet and torment yourselves with laying up much goods for many years; yet which of you, with all his solicitude, can add one hour to that very life for the sake of which ye would accumulate them? If ye then be unable to do that which is least; if ye cannot effect so small a matter as that of prolonging your life for a single hour, why do ye so anxiously pursue the means of indulging it? This is to act like the *nations of the world*, who know not God: but ye are taught to consider him as a kind indulgent father, who knoweth what his children have need of: and who hath given me authority to assure you, that if ye diligently seek his favour, by a life of piety and virtue, *all these things*, as far as they are necessary to your real happiness, shall be added unto you.

We have now seen the full purport of the question in the text, and what an additional force and significancy it receives from our Saviour's argument on this subject; an argument wherein he so beautifully displays the power

power, and goodness, and providence of God; in opposition to the weakness, the anxiety, and selfishness of man, that a rational mind can have no doubt, on whom we are to depend for the comfort and security of this life, and on what principles we may sanctify its enjoyments.

And yet the generous spirit of our holy religion is so far from meaning to reduce us to a worse condition than nature placed us in, that it both gives us *the promise of the life which now is, and of that which is to come* \*. The divine author of it hath indeed assured us, that our best and most important interests are in a future world: and if he exhorts us to give them the preference, can we blame him for the friendly caution? In the meantime, *while we are in the body*, if we be allowed the free use of our powers and abilities, to make an honest provision for *the things of the body*, can nature and reason require more? But we are not only allowed, we are admonished, we are excited to a diligent application of our several abilities. For religion gives no countenance to an indolent and

\* 1 Tim. iv. 8.

lothful

lothful trust in Providence. On the contrary it commands us to improve our *talents*, both in a natural and moral sense: *not to be slothful in business*, but to *work with our hands the things that are good*, as well for our own benefit and advantage, as that we may *have to give to him that needeth* \*.—And the Apostle's reason is, because we are members one of another; in which view, every branch of honest industry is so much religious and civil virtue: for he who punctually discharges the duties of his station is at the same time effectually pursuing the ends of Providence; whose wise appointment it is, that *no man liveth for himself*: but that the happiness of the community should depend upon the combined endeavours of individuals; and that those advantages which are the established effects of human diligence, should also be the natural motives to exert it.

Hence then it will follow, that it cannot be the honest acquisition of wealth and riches that religion condemns; but the iniquitous pursuit, the avaricious desire, or the intemperate use of them—the setting our whole

\* Ephes. iv. 28.

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affections on these things of the earth, and suffering them to rival God in our confidence.—It is the laying up treasure for ourselves, and vainly taking thought for a short and precarious life, which all the treasures upon earth would not enable us to prolong for one hour.

And yet, with all that religion can urge or experience teach us, the things of the world are but too apt to have their hold with us—still excite as much eagerness and solicitude for the various gratifications of this life, as if it were never to have an end. The truth is, *the fashion of the world*, which is both the cause and the effect of such a conduct, creates an infinite number of desires which modest nature would not otherwise have thought of; and which, not being essential to the real happiness of our nature, though greatly so to the trial of it, a wise Providence hath left to their free course. For as St. John observes, *the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, are not of the Father, but of the world*\*.—They are the lawless offspring of vanity, of emulation, of avarice, of luxury, of intemperance.—They captivate the heart

\* 1 John ii. 16.

by addressing themselves to the imagination, and divert us from pressing forwards in the race of virtue, by the splendid allurements which at every opportunity they throw in our way. They infuse likewise the false notion of estimating a man's happiness by his riches; one of the earliest prejudices of the mind. For riches being found to command every thing that enters into the idea of earthly happiness, are for that reason eagerly coveted and diligently pursued; whilst a vain emulation of doing like the rest of the world, insensibly leads people into a *mode* of living, that is either above their *rank*, or above their *circumstances*; not considering that what is decency and propriety in *some* ranks, becomes a ridiculous ostentation in *others*. *Pride* indeed may persuade weak minds, that wealth and affluence are the great levellers of all distinction: and the easy admission they procure to every fashionable and expensive gratification, may confirm such persuasion.—But *vanity* is too apt to reckon without her counters; and seldom discovers the mistake in her *calculation*, till it is too late to correct it. And yet so inconsistent is mankind, that while some reduce themselves to indigence by attempting

tempting to live above their means, others are sometimes rendered miserable by too much affluence—not too much for their desires, but too much for their happiness;—if their wealth, instead of being under the direction of virtue, be applied to the selfish purposes of prodigality or avarice: for as the *prodigal* thinks he can never have *enough* for dissipation; so the *covetous* believes he can never have *too much* for convenience. And hence it should seem, that many people in the world might have been more happy, had they been less fortunate: great possessions leading some men into wretched tormenting cares; and others into many criminal and dangerous indulgencies. For how seldom is the danger attended to, when the slippery path of life is overspread with the flowers of delight, and fresh relays of pleasure are provided for them at every turn?—When *one day telleth another and one night certifieth another, that to-morrow shall be as to-day, and much more abundantly*\*? When every thing solicits that can possibly be contrived, either by *ingenuity*, to charm the fancy; by *luxury*, to heighten the relish; by *fashion*, to inflame the desire, or

\* *Isaiah lvi. 12.*

prodigality to support the expence of our several modes of entertainment?—But, if men will be thus solicitous for the enjoyments of life,—if *self-indulgence* be so powerful a principle, let them not be unmindful of a much more important principle; for religion assures them that they *who live in pleasure are dead while they live*—dead to all the purposes of a spiritual life; often dead also to the selfish ends of animal life: when like old Barzillai, but from a very different cause, they can *no longer discern between good and evil; no longer taste what they eat or what they drink; nor hear the voice of men-singers and women-singers*\*. Whereas the temperate and virtuous measure the easy descent of life, with a slow but steady pace; and after diffusing the warmth of their benevolence to all around them, serenely close the evening of a long and happy day, with that unclouded lustre which promises a glorious rising to immortality!

Upon the whole, we are taught by the passage of scripture which suggested these obvious reflections, that our best security, for life and happiness, depends not upon the in-

\* 2 Sam. xix. 35.

digence

digence or affluence of our condition but upon our behaviour under it. Riches neither are nor can be every man's portion; and, if they were, they would not be riches. But a gracious Providence hath ordained, that the moderate supplies, which nature calls for, should be acquired with common industry. The bulk of mankind *having food and raiment* are *therewith content*: and even such accommodations as are necessary for the higher stations of life, will seldom fail in the hands of the virtuous; *for our heavenly Father knoweth that we have need of these things*. We must nevertheless acknowledge, that it would be a very blameable part of our conduct, if, without any regard to *religious* or *prudential* considerations; without *ever ascribing* the blessings we enjoy to the *bounty* of God, or placing any confidence in his *protection*, we should consider our possessions, rather as the *means* of supporting the *pomp* and *parade* of life, than as *instruments* of trial committed to us for the exercise and improvement of our virtue, and for the *godlike* purpose of doing good. *Humanity* indeed, and a generous compassion for the distressed, give a beautiful lustre to our national character; and while

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the *effects* are so visible, it would be injurious to question the *cause*. On the other hand, it is greatly to be wished, that the many instances of extravagant indulgence which are so visible, were only a proof of the large accession of wealth that hath been poured in upon us, and not of any guilt or folly in the application of it. Happy should we be, if we increased in virtue, as we increase in affluence! If whilst our riches procure us all the agreeable accommodations of life, by adding elegance to convenience; they were also instrumental in making us *rich towards God*. But we must not deceive ourselves. The steps from affluence to luxury, from luxury to impiety, and from impiety to misery, are so plainly marked out by their destructive progress in other ages and countries, that they seem to be held out to us by Providence, like those lights which are placed upon a rocky shore, to caution the unwary mariner against too near an approach to it. Let us learn then from these examples, but much more from the words of truth, where to look for the most effectual security, both for our present and future happiness; and let us ever remember, that although none of us

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by taking thought can prolong his life for one hour beyond the time which God hath appointed, yet *he that liveth and believeth in him*, cannot be said to die—but only to exchange this imperfect state of being, for one that will have its perfect consummation in bliss and glory.

S E R -

## S E R M O N XVII.

THE APPOINTED TIME OF CHRIST'S DEATH,  
THE MOST PROPER AND SEASONABLE.

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ROMANS V. 6.

*In due time Christ died for the ungodly.*

THE great object of divine revelation was gradually to unfold the mystery of man's redemption by Christ.—To this end the scripture was given by inspiration of God: and hence it is truly said, that *the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.*

This testimony goes to every article of the Christian Faith—to that in particular which is the interesting subject of this day's devotion; and it is confirmed by the authority of an inspired Apostle, that, *in due time Christ died for the ungodly.*

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But,

But, instructed as we are, at what an early period the redemption of fallen man was promised, ~~we may thence be led to inquire, why~~ so many generations passed away, and were ~~left to walk in darkness, and in the shadow of eternal death, before the sun of righteousness arose, to guide their feet into the way of peace.~~

In answer to this, it will be sufficient to say, that whatever period of time had been appointed by the all-wise, Almighty Father, for the ministry, and meritorious sufferings of his eternally begotten Son, must certainly have been the fittest time; for infinite wisdom *seeth the end from the beginning*. On this ground, it is expressly declared in the words of the text, “*that in due time Christ died for the ungodly.*”

The expression, *in due time*, or, according to the appointed time, implies the intervention of some circumstances *preparatory* to this great event: and these may be collected from a brief review of the progressive state of things,

1st, Under the Mosaic Dispensation, and

2dly, Under the ruling powers of the Heathen World.

And first, that an infinitely wise Creator may, in the exercise of his moral government, effectuate his purposes by the intervention of his creatures, is an unquestionable truth.—If then he was pleased to make choice of the Jewish nation, to be the principal instruments of conveying the mysterious plan of the Christian Dispensation, through a series of ages, to the proper time for its accomplishment; ought we not to defer as much to infinite *wisdom*, in the choice of the means, as to infinite *goodness*, in the accomplishment of the end?

Not but we may perceive a certain propriety in the choice of that people, to be the instruments of his will, even on the score of religious merit.

Descended from an ancestor eminently distinguished for his many virtues; and to whom the divine veracity stood engaged, that in his

*seed all the nations of the earth should be blessed*\* ; they were, at the time of our Saviour's ministry upon earth, the only people, who, amidst the gross idolatry that had overspread the world, retained any sense of true religion, and the unity of the divine nature; principles, which, being of the utmost importance to moral virtue, and the glory of God, had on all occasions merited the divine protection.

It needs not be told in what a miraculous manner that protection had been displayed in *their* favour; nor how the *holy* one of *Israel*, who, with a mighty hand, and outstretched arm, wrought their deliverance from Egyptian bondage, as the same divine Agent, who, in *due time*, was sent with the offer of a *more plenteous redemption*. We need only observe that, from the very commencement of their *economy*, they experienced every providential interposition that the circumstances of their case required—all tending to impress their minds with an awful reverence for that name which is *great, wonderful, and holy*—all directed to enforce an inviolable adherence

\* Gen. xxii. 18.

to those religious institutions that were equally appointed to be the tests of their obedience, and to prefigure a more *precious sacrifice* that was to come.

But the intermediate events were of a different cast; and, for many ages, alternately composed of desertions to idolatry, and returns to duty—of captivity and deliverance—of vindictive justice, and pardoning goodness. In every thing was the hand of heaven, which alone can draw good out of evil, clear and manifest. The repeated captivities of this peculiar people was made productive of more general happiness, by diffusing a knowledge of the *only true God*, through the several places of their dispersion.

It was during one of these remarkable captivities, that the prophet Daniel foretold the precise time when the Messiah should be cut off, but not for himself; assigning a period of four hundred and ninety years to intervene between the prediction and its accomplishment: and it was in consequence of a subsequent captivity that the sacred books of the Old Testament were translated into a language

which was generally understood by the commercial and learned world. Hence the predictions of the prophets became the objects of more general attention: and, as those relating to the Messiah, were the more clear and express, the later they were delivered; so we learn from the heathen historians of the time, that a notion very generally prevailed, of "a mighty prince being about to appear in *the east*, who should obtain the empire of the world." A true description, in one sense, of him who was to have the heathen for his inheritance, and the utmost parts of the earth for his possession.

And now the *due time* was at hand, when a period was to be put to the Jewish *œconomy*; when the Messiah was to give his life *an offering for sin*; or, as the text expresseth it, *was to die for the ungodly*.—Their *second Temple*, which the Messiah was to glorify by his presence, was rebuilt,—their *daily sacrifice* was *restored*—the knowledge of God was spread abroad—the *Baptist*, Christ's forerunner, had finished his course; and *Jerusalem* was become the great resort, at their solemn *festivals*,

festivals, for *Jews* and *Proselytes* of every nation under heaven.

But Jerusalem had well nigh filled up the measure of its iniquities; and its doom had been written in the tears of a rejected Saviour! Approaching the city for the last time, he beheld, *and wept over it*. He foresaw its impending miseries, the days of vengeance that were coming upon it, in a much nearer view than Moses had, and thus graphically describes them.—*If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things that belong to thy peace!*—but now they are *hid from thine eyes*.—*For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, and shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee*; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation\*!

To relate how exactly all this was verified, has been the painful office of their own historians: whilst the numerous posterity of the

\* Luke xix. 44.

Jewish nation, still remaining unsettled, unmixed, and unchanged in their original character, have served to convey, through every age and country of the habitable world, a living testimony of the promised Messiah being *already come*, and that they need not *look for another*.

Here then we are led to consider how properly the time of Christ's ministry and death was appointed, with respect to the state of religion and morals in the Gentile world.

At the great æra when *life and immortality were brought to light* by the Christian Revelation, the supreme dominion of the most civilized nations had been acquired by the Romans; a people long foreseen by the eye of prophecy, and to whom Judea itself had lately become a tributary province—a circumstance which decided the very manner of Christ's death as foretold by the prophets.

This extensive empire, acquired no less by their policy than their power, they had hitherto maintained by their moderation and clemency. Their *laws* were rather granted to

to the conquered as a privilege, than imposed upon them as a yoke: and they were generally more inclined to adopt the *religious* modes of other countries, than to impose their own.

At this period, too, the Romans were as respectable for their learning, as their power; and, if less sagacious than the Greeks, certainly not less solid.

But the truths which our divine Master had revealed, the miracles he had wrought, and the example he had set, were proof against the inquisition of both these qualities. Falsehood *may* impose upon ignorance, and *imposture* on credulity; but *truth* only can stand the test of a sound and penetrating judgment: —well therefore might infinite wisdom deem it the fittest time for sending him, who was *the truth and the life*, to seal his doctrines with his blood, when the wisdom of the world was sufficient to try the *reasonableness* of any doctrine; but could attain to no certainty on points that might secure immortal happiness, unless it had been revealed from above.

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We must nevertheless acknowledge that the moral systems of these great and learned people, were far superior to their religious notions: shewing to what sublime heights the human powers can soar in speculation, and how low they fall in practice.

Yet still they were *but systems*—laws without sanctions—precepts without authority, and rules without restraint: erected also on the loose foundation of human opinion, they were often shaken by the discordant notions of contending sects; the most prevalent of which admitted a *full claim* to sensual indulgence.

Even those branches of morality which appeared the most beautiful and fruitful, seldom sprung from a stronger root than the unstable applause resulting from the practice of *public virtue* or personal valour; unassured of that future and eternal recompence of reward, which in *due time* was promised to every *good and faithful servant of Christ*.

Upon the whole, without entering into further considerations, we may rest assured, that the proper time was come for a general revelation

lation of those saving truths for which Christ died, and rose again to establish ; when the very nations, who valued themselves so much on their high attainments in knowledge, and the polished manners of civil life, as to account the rest of mankind barbarians—appear to have retained such unbecoming sentiments of the Deity, and such superstitious forms of worship, as differed little from those of the most savage barbarians, except in the pomp and splendor of their temples and their ceremonies.—Both indeed worshipped *they knew not what*—the time was now come, when they might learn to worship the only true God *in spirit and in truth*.

Here then let us pause ; and with the warmest gratitude pour out our tribute of praise and thanksgiving to him *who*, at the appointed time, *gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works* \*.—Let us neither be so wise in our own conceits, as to deny the necessity of any revelation ; nor so weak as to perplex ourselves with difficulties, why this last and

\* Titus ii. 14.

most perfect discovery of human *duty*, and human *hope*, was withheld from the world so long.

Happy, as we are, in the glorious prospects it opens to us, let us steadily pursue both the *means* and the *end* of a dispensation which had infinite *goodness* for its motive, and infinite *wisdom* for its direction.

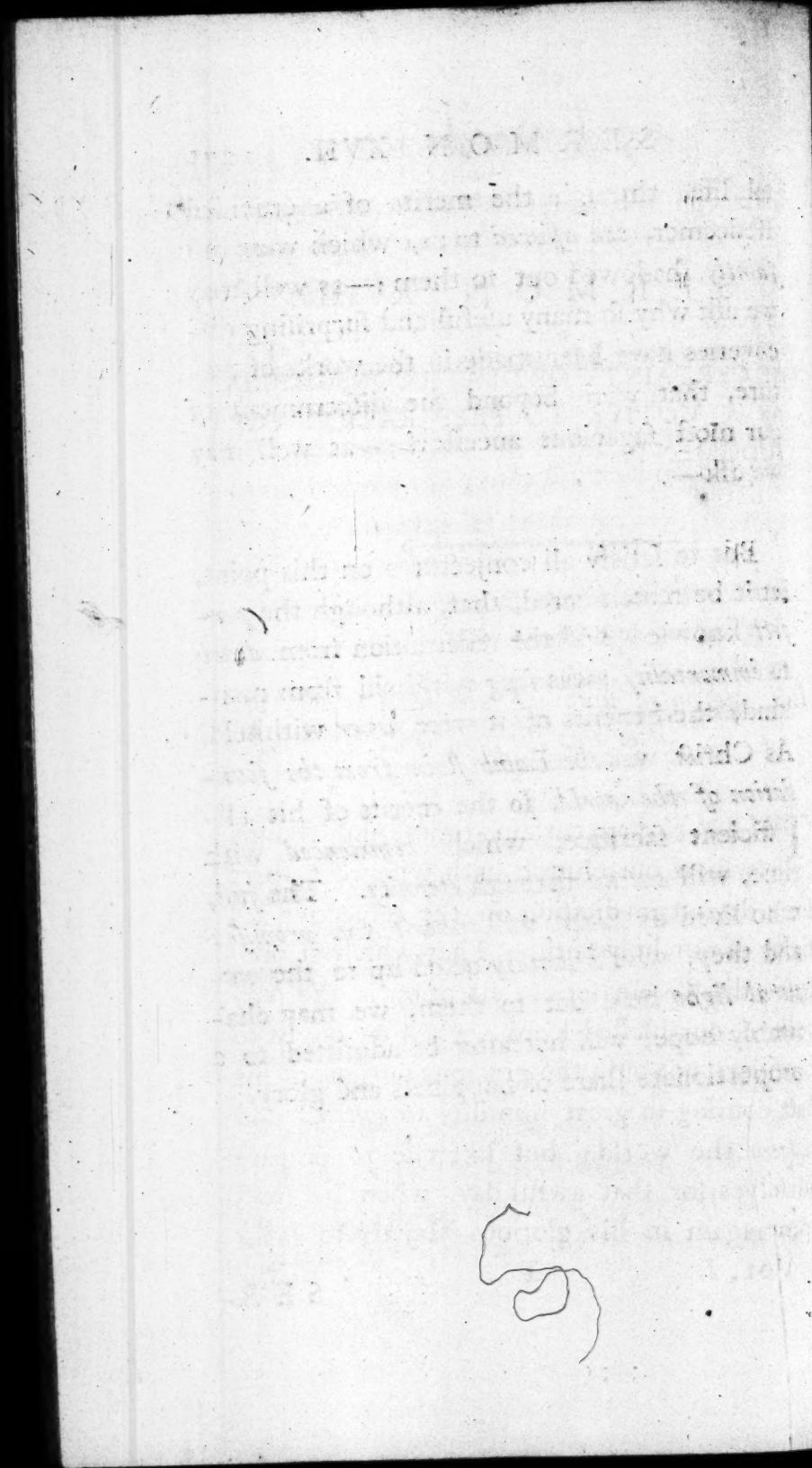
These perfections of the Almighty are actuated by views of general, not partial good.—Whilst the most extensive human knowledge hath bounds which it cannot pass—sees but in part, and prophesies in part. It is God alone, in *whose sight a thousand years are but as yesterday*, that can pervade the most remote events of futurity; can adjust all his dispensations to their respective occasions; and clearly foresees what advantages will result from their appointment at one period of time, preferably to another.

As well may we ask why the life of man is not now protracted to the same extent of duration as in the first ages of the world; as to ask why the hopes of a resurrection to immortal

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tal life, through the merits of a crucified Redeemer, are *assured* to us, which were but faintly shadowed out to them;—as well may we ask why so many useful and surprising discoveries have been made in the works of nature, that were beyond the discernment of our most sagacious ancestors;—as well may we ask—

But to satisfy all conjectures on this point, let it be remembered, that, although the *perfect knowledge* of the redemption from *death to immortality*, was *long withheld* from mankind, the *benefits* of it were *never withheld*. As Christ was *the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world*, so the *merits* of his *all-sufficient sacrifice*, which *commenced* with time, will *extend through eternity*. The *just*, who lived by *faith*, will *inherit the promise*: and they, who sincerely acted up to the *natural light* held out to them, we may charitably hope, will hereafter be admitted to a proportionate share of *happiness and glory*.



## SERMON XVIII.

THE CERTAINTY OF DEATH CONSIDERED,  
AS A MOTIVE TO PREPARATION FOR  
JUDGMENT.

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HEB. ix. 27.

*It is appointed unto all men once to die, but  
after this the judgment.*

THERE are certain times and seasons which our church hath wisely set apart for a devout meditation on the respective articles of our holy faith. That which at present calls for our serious attention is the Advent of our blessed Lord ; when we ought to consider, not only the gracious purpose of his first coming in great humility to *instruct* and *redeem* the world ; but likewise to prepare ourselves for that awful day, when he shall come again in his glorious Majesty to *judge*

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the world. These are events of infinite importance to human happiness. As such they are revealed to us in scripture; and the passage I have chosen for my text, when opened and explained, will I hope establish the belief of them.

*It is appointed unto men, says the text, once to die, but after this the judgment.* Attend now to this declaration in its full extent, and it will suggest to us the most affecting considerations in which it is possible for human nature to be concerned—it includes the two great, but different scenes of our existence; the one limited by a short, but uncertain period of *time*; the other extended through the endless duration of *eternity*: it reminds us of, what daily experience should point out to us, the frailty and precariousness of our *present life*; and discovers also, what reason and revelation jointly conspire to assure us of, the certainty of a state of retribution in *that which is to come*. *Death and judgment* are words of solemn and awful import: but if we habituate the mind to think of them *with seriousness*, we shall thence be prepared to meet them *without terror*. Let us proceed then

to recollect some very obvious but interesting reflexions on these two important subjects ; and to deduce such inferences from them as may tend to influence our conduct.

And first, we are reminded that it is appointed unto men *once* to die.—Such is the condition of our nature ! The unalterable appointment of the great Creator of all things ! whose goodness, as it first *brought* man into being, and *breathed into his nostrils the breath of life* ; so his wisdom and justice thought fit to change the *manner* of our being : accordingly, *when he taketh away our breath we die* ; and the material part of us *returns again to dust*. *He* therefore, that self-existent being, in *whose hands are the issues of life and death*, hath fixed the *one* to be the express condition of the *other*. *He* hath appointed men *once* to die, and *once only*. But is *this* all our consolation ? that the condition *once* performed, we shall not be liable to a second arrest ; death *will no more have dominion over us* ? For alas ! how absolute is that dominion, which not the united force of thrones, principalities and powers, is for one moment able to withstand ! How inexorable is that wrath which is hourly

involving *high and low, rich and poor, the youthful and the aged*, in one common destruction—which strikes with the same relentless arm the tender innocent in the bosom of its parent, and the hoary sinner already withered with infirmities ; which arrests the *thoughtless* in their full career of pleasure ; the *industrious* in their eager pursuit of profit ; and the *learned* in their painful researches of wisdom and knowledge ; which with one fatal stroke defeats all their schemes, destroys the best concerted plan of wealth and greatness, and levels the loftiest fabric of human happiness even with the ground. O mortality ! thou severe condition of our existence, *without* which none can ever live ; and *with* which, even the longest life is of short duration ; from what fountain of bitterness dost thou fill that cup which must not pass away except we drink it ? Why was this sad necessity imposed upon man, the *lord* of this lower world, in common *with the beasts which perish* ? Why are all these *less* liable to disease ; the lives of most of them of a more *certain*, and some of a *longer* duration than that of man himself ? Why also is he alone perpetually subject to the fear of death, whilst the brutes, *which*

which have no understanding, can only suffer death, but do not fear it?—Nay but, O man! who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, why hast thou made me thus? If disease, and death, be the most dreaded of human evils, consider whence they were derived: not from the arbitrary appointment of God, but from the wilful disobedience of man, who first began to be mortal, when he ceased to be innocent. The natural corruption of the body was in consequence of the moral impurity of the soul: for by sin came death: and the fatal connexion once formed, hath ever remained inseparable. Just therefore is the Apostle's reasoning; as, by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; so death hath passed upon all men; because all have sinned. But O wretched men that we are, who shall deliver us from death eternal! God himself will deliver us, through the merits and intercession of our Saviour; will ransom us from the power of the grave; will redeem us from death: for though in Adam all die, yet in Christ shall all be made alive. Consider then, this wonderful scheme

\* Rom. ix. 20.      † Ibid. v. 12.      ‡ Hosea xiii. 14.

§ 1 Cor. xv. 22.

of Providence, as it is delineated to us in the scriptures, and we shall be enabled to vindicate the dispensations of God to man ; shall learn to acknowledge and adore his *wisdom* in the *manner* of our *creation*, his *justice* in the *punishment* of our *corruption*, and his *mercy* in the *gracious means* of our *redemption* : and, upon viewing the great result of all, we shall be forced to cry out with the devout Apostle—*O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God ! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out* \* !

Allowing then the necessity of *dying*, as well as the uncertainty of *living* ; and granting also, what needs not now be proved, that *death* does not *destroy*, but only *change* the *manner* of our *existence* ; and the principal consideration will be,—what is to be our *portion* hereafter ? *It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment.*—In this enquiry the mind of man becomes more deeply interested. It is not to *die* only, and to be as if we had *never been* : Another *scene* of things, a different, but *eternal state* of exist-

\* Rom. xi. 33.

ence is opened to our imagination; wherein we shall be more affected with happiness or misery, more strongly impressed with sensations of pleasure or pain, than in the present state of our being; as the soul will then be all-conscious, all-attentive to its own perceptions, no longer encumbered with the gross, material body which obstructed its operations; no longer amused with sensual objects, or engaged in making *provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof.*

Under these apprehensions we might try the force of every rational conjecture that hath been offered in confirmation of this great and important truth.—We might deduce it from considerations on the perfections and providence of God; or the obligations and capacities of man; from the impossibility of vindicating the justice of the divine administration, without admitting the certainty of a future judgment; from the natural and universal desire of perpetual existence, from the strength and vigour that are often observable in the spiritual faculties, even after those of the body are sunk and broken with infirmities; from those intellectual powers which

enable us to distinguish between the objects that approve themselves to our reason, and those which solicit our appetites; from our moral liberty, and freedom of action, inseparably attended with that self-applauding or condemning consciousness, which in some measure, seems to anticipate that future sentence which the good hope for, and the wicked fear:—To these considerations, if others were to be added on the promiscuous distribution of happiness and misery in this life, we might even upon a rational view conclude, that doubtless there is a God that will judge the world in righteousness.

On the other hand, freedom of choice, and liberty of action, together with a capacity to distinguish between right and wrong, between vice and virtue, are properties only of rational and intelligent beings: and such a being is man.—But how is it that *man* alone of all the various orders of animal creatures, should be thus eminently distinguished, thus particularly endowed with *intelligence* to discern between the objects that approve themselves to his reason, and those which solicit his appetites; and yet not *necessarily* determined to the choice

of

of either, but often divided and balancing between both? How, I say, can this remarkable provision be accounted for, but on the supposition that man is here placed in a *state of trial and probation*, preparatory to a more perfect state hereafter? and that the design of an infinitely wise and just God, in thus entrusting his rational creatures with their own liberty, was to render them accountable to his justice for their use of it; and to subject them to the sanctions of those laws of his moral government, which he hath prescribed for their direction.

And here from the consideration of the *justice* of God, a perfection as essential to his nature as *power*, and *wisdom*, and *goodness*, arises the idea of his *providence*; which, as it can neither be inattentive, nor indifferent to the right or wrong conduct of free agents, must be supposed to be impartially exercised in a just distribution of the punishments and rewards of human actions. But is such the administration of Providence in the present scene of things? is the *divine approbation* always manifested by the prosperous condition of the virtuous; or his *displeasure* in

in the destitute and miserable state of the wicked?—It must be confessed they are not.—*Distressed virtue, and prosperous villainy, are not only real, but common cases*; and yet both may be permitted by Providence, either as the natural result of *human liberty*, abused by *passion*, and perverted by *appetite*: or as the unavoidable consequences of *ill-concerted schemes*, and *mistaken policy*. But still, these promiscuous distributions of happiness and misery, if they really be so, can extend no further than the present life. So that, though, according to the ordinary course of things, there may be *one event to the righteous and to the wicked*, in this short and precarious state of being; yet we may be as sure, as that God is *just, and wise, and good*, that the virtuous can no more be *miserable*, upon the whole of their existence, than the wicked can be *happy*.

In the mean time has not the supreme Governor of the universe made all the declarations in favour of right conduct that could be consistent with the liberty of moral agents? by annexing *happiness*, though not in all, yet, in most cases, to the practice of *virtue*; and by appointing *misery*, and pain, though perhaps

haps not always *adversity*, to be inseparable attendants on *vicious actions*? Nay more, is not every virtuous attainment as sure to be followed with the conscious approbation, as every base pursuit is with the most uneasy and painful apprehensions of our own minds?— What a wise and gracious provision is this for the direction of rational but fallible beings! The confines between right and wrong, are separated, as it were, by a narrow and dangerous channel: but these natural *apprehensions*, being fixed in the mind, serve as *lights* that are placed upon a lofty shore; to point out to the unthinking mariner those rocks and shoals that lurk under the deceitful surface, to direct him how to reach the blissful harbour of eternity. Besides, it is evident, from what every one feels, if he attends to what passes in his own mind, that the force of these apprehensions is neither much diminished by the present consequence of our actions, nor confined to them. It reaches forward to futurity, and in some measure anticipates that final judgment which the *good* hope for, and the *wicked* fear.

But

But after all, what are the most probable conjectures of human reason compared with the clear *revelation of the righteous judgment of God*, as displayed in the gospel? They are only as the faint glimmering of the morning star, which fades away to nothing at the rising splendor of the sun. For, in the sacred scriptures the certainty of a future state of retribution opens upon the mind with an irresistible force of truth, completing the wonderful plan of Providence which remained undisclosed for many ages; and enabling us fully to vindicate the wisdom and goodness of the divine dispensations, as we clearly perceive that they all have respect unto the final *recompence of reward*, which he will render unto every man according to his works.

See then, with what truth and propriety of character the scriptures represent the supreme Governor of the world, as the judge and rewarder of human actions. *Wisdom* and *knowledge*, *impartiality* and *integrity* give us the highest idea we can conceive of the merit of an earthly judge. But what are all these qualities united, in comparison of the infinite perfections of the Almighty? *I am he*, saith the

the spirit of God, *who searcheth the reins and hearts* \*. He knoweth the secret springs of our thoughts, even before they are carried into action. And as *there is not any creature that is not manifest in his sight* ; but all things are naked and open to the eyes of him with whom we have to do †, and to whom we are accountable ; so he will bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil ‡. Artfully concealed as the ways of the wicked may have been from the *eye* of the world : fair as the hypocrite may have stood in the *opinion* of short-sighted creatures like himself, by casting a *veil* of darkness and secrecy over the most criminal conduct ; yet will he hereafter find, that *the darkness was no darkness with God, but the night was as clear as the day* : *the darkness and light to him are both alike* §.

Thus wonderful in discerning the ways of men, is the *wisdom*, and no less impartial is the *justice* of God. He also who is the common Father of all intelligent beings, cannot be swayed by any partial affections.—Love

\* Rev. ii. 23.    † Heb. iv. 13.    ‡ Eccles. xii. 14.

§ Psalm cxxxix. 12.

and

and hatred, resentment and envy, caprice or interest, may sometimes pervert the judgment of human tribunals, but can never influence the divine decrees. Accordingly we are assured that *God is no respecter of persons: but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted of him* \*. On this invariable principle all his decrees will turn,—*He will render unto every man according to his deeds: to them, who by patient continuance in well doing, seek for glory and honour, and immortality, eternal life: but unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil* †. And, as a further proof of the equity and impartiality of the divine decisions, the gospel shews us, that they will be exactly proportioned to the moral improvement or neglect of those capacities which have been implanted in us: for *that servant who knew his lord's will, and did it not, shall be beaten with many stripes* ‡: that they will concur with the internal evidence of our own conscience: for *out of thine own*

\* *Acts x. 34, 35.*

† *Rom. ii. 6, 7, 8, 9.*

‡ *Luke xii. 48.*

mouth

*mouth will I judge thee, thou wicked servant!*

—That they will be adjusted also to the measures of benevolence and mercy, we shall have dispensed to our fellow-creatures: for *if we forgive not men their trespasses, neither will our heavenly Father forgive us* \*.—And, what ought to be a very affecting consideration, they will be proportioned to the *patient distresses* of the virtuous, and the *wanton abuses* of the prosperous; for, it is the declaration of Christ himself in the person of Abraham: *Son, remember that thou in thy life time receivedſt thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now, he is comforted, and thou art tormented* †.

Again, that nothing might be wanting to impress the minds of men with an awful sense of this great and terrible day of the Lord, when *he cometh with righteousness to judge the world, and his people with equity*, the sacred writers have heightened the description of it with such noble images, and with such a dignity of expression, as nothing but inspiration itself could suggest. After informing us that God, agreeably to the eternal purposes of

\* Matt. vi. 15.

† Luke xvi. 25.

his

his providence, hath committed all judgment to his Son, by whom also he made the worlds; they proceed to set before us the solemnity of his appearance: That he will descend from heaven in the brightness of his Father's glory, with ten thousands of his saints, and all the host of angels: whilst the firmament on high resounds with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God. At this glorious appearance the fashion of this world shall pass away, and the whole material frame of things shall be disjointed. The heavens also being on fire shall be dissolved; the elements shall melt with a fervent heat, and the earth, and the works that are therein, shall be burnt up\*, and withered as a scroll.—With these illustrious manifestations of his power, he shall sit upon the throne of his glory†; and before him shall be gathered all nations ‡. Then shall that just and final separation be made to the right hand, and to the left, wherein virtue and vice, the religious and the impious, shall be eminently distinguished: and the decisive sentence which will then be pronounced, shall for ever determine the respective happiness and misery of all intelligent beings.

\* 2 Peter x. 12. † Matt. xix. 28. ‡ Ibid. xxv. 31.

And

And now, upon the whole, what are the sentiments, what the conduct, which these interesting considerations should suggest to us? If death itself be not more certain than a judgment to come; and if some evidence of this awful truth arises naturally out of our notions of the perfections and providence of God, and the moral obligations and capacities of man: if it be immovably fixed in the apprehensions of the human mind, and receives the strongest confirmation from the discoveries of the gospel;—*what manner of persons ought we to be in all holy conversation and godliness!* Let us then frequently reflect, that our everlasting doom depends entirely upon our present conduct; and let us pursue that reflection to its proper consequences; not only to examine wherein we have done wrong, or to form serious purposes of amendment for the time to come; but to carry those purposes into immediate execution. But, as the Apostle declares, *if we continue to sin wilfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking-for of judgment, and fiery indignation, which shall devour the impenitent:*

We know that sin, to obtain pardon, must be followed by repentance, but may not death prevent it? If we have lived long enough to *commit* sin, can we be assured that we shall still live long enough to *repent* of it?—The uncertainty therefore of life, should put us upon making *immediate preparation for death*; especially as *that* will also be a preparation for judgment. And yet it is to be feared, that the whole of life is often lost, as to the moral uses of it, by not attending to the uncertainty of its duration.—Look into the world, and you see daily and melancholy proofs of it: look into the scriptures, and you find the kindest admonitions to remind you of it. *What is man*, says the psalmist, *but a thing of nought, whose time passeth away like a shadow*\*? and, *what is your life*, says the Apostle†, *but a vapour that appeareth but for a little while, and then vanisheth away*? Nor does the prophet ‡ assign us a more durable period.—*All flesh is grass*, says he, *and all the goodliness thereof as the flower of the field—but the grass withereth and the flower fadeth!* Why now are such fleeting forms as

\* Psalm cxliv. 4. † James iv. 14. ‡ Isa. xliiv. 6, 7.  
these

these pointed out as the fittest emblems of human life, but to direct us to a proper and rational use of our short and uncertain abode in *this world*, in order to entitle us to the endless felicity of *the next*? Be not, then, so amused with the succession of days, and months, and years, as to forget that you are incessantly advancing to your last moment.— Consider, that, in fact, the moment you begin to live, you begin to die; for the seeds of life and death are sown and grow up together: and those years which add to your growth and strength, to your riches and honours, are just so many taken away from the *sum total of life*; and all the remainder is nothing but *uncertainty*; for *we know neither the day nor the hour* in which it will expire. But this we certainly know, that *it is appointed unto men once to die, but after that the judgment*: Let this knowledge make us wise unto salvation. Let it produce in us a constant and even tenor of goodness; for that will be our strongest security against the *surprise* of death, as well as the best preparation for our *appearance* in judgment.—In a word, let us set a proper share of our *affections* on things

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above, and not devote them all to the things of the earth ; that when Christ who is our second life shall appear, we also may appear with him in glory \*.

\* Col. iii. 4.

S E R .

## S E R M O N XIX.

## THE FULNESS OF TIME.

GAL. iv. 4.

*When the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son.*

TO search into the counsels, and to aim at assigning causes for the proceedings of an infinitely wise Being, is an attempt little suited to the capacities of human nature. Reason, abstractedly considered, is too feeble a light to guide us through the intricate paths of Providence. We can only collect the scattered rays that revelation hath shed upon them—enough at least to content us with the happy effects of the divine dispensations, though we cannot perfectly discover the cause.

Such will be the result of our enquiries into the fitness and propriety of that period of time, wherein God was pleased to publish the last and most perfect declaration of his will, by the personal appearance and ministry of his Son. That it *must* have been the fittest time is certain, from the single consideration of the infinite wisdom of him who appointed it; and the reason *why* it was the fittest time, must ever be referred to the same wisdom. But yet, as this glorious event has long been happily determined, we are thence enabled to trace out many progressive steps of Providence in the conduct of it; and, from considering the then state and condition of the world, may collect some very probable reasons why it took place at that time preferably to any other. We might indeed avail ourselves of the several prophecies which immediately relate to this memorable era, and point out the perfect coincidence between the predictions, and the event which they precisely fix to a certain period: but as these are proofs that the sincere believer cannot want, and the incredulous do not readily admit, it will be sufficient to rest the present enquiry upon a deduction of other circumstances.

Thus,

Thus, a short review of the divine proceedings towards the Jewish nation :—of the enlargement of the Roman power :—of the improvements in human learning, and the wrong principles of religion and morality which then obtained in every part of the world, will in some measure discover to us both the fulness and the fitness of that particular *time* wherein God sent forth his Son.

And first, That the Creator in the exercise of his moral government may conduct his designs by the intervention of his creatures ; and that the manner in which he is pleased to conduct them must ever be the fittest and best, are unquestionable truths ; for they arise from a just idea of his adorable perfections.— If then it be a fact, and we have all the moral certainty of it that the nature of things will admit, that God was pleased to make use of the Jewish people, as the principal instruments of conducting the merciful design of the christian dispensation, through a series of many ages, ought we not to defer as much to infinite wisdom in the *choice* of the *means*, as to infinite goodness in the *appointment* of the *end*? Thus to the Jews were committed

the oracles of God ; and a succession of prophets raised up among them, who, besides their occasional communications of the divine will, were gradually to unfold the coming and kingdom of the Messiah, *whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed*\*. It has long, indeed, been the peculiar misfortune of the Jewish people, and not the least of the many chastisements denounced against them, that the rest of mankind have habitually associated the ideas of ridicule and contempt with their very name ; yet even this circumstance, however it may affect their present interests, stamps the signature of truth upon the history of their better days ; and offers this conclusion to every candid mind, that the Jews would not have been once the most favoured, often the most punished, and still the most wonderfully preserved, of any people upon earth, but to serve some great and important ends of Providence, which in due time were to be accomplished among them. Not but we may plainly perceive a certain propriety in the choice of this people, even on the ground of moral recti-

\* Daniel vii. 14. Mic. iv. 7. Luke i. 33.

tude.

tude.—Descended from an ancestor eminently distinguished for his faith in God, and his many virtues; and to whom therefore the divine veracity stood engaged, that in his seed *all the nations of the earth should be blessed*\*, they were, at this period, the only people, who, amidst the gross idolatry that had overspread the world, retained any sense of true religion, and the unity of the divine nature.—Principles, which, as they were of the utmost importance to moral virtue, and to the honour and majesty of God, may well be supposed to recommend the professors of them to his all-powerful protection.

It needs not be told in what a miraculous manner this protection was often displayed in their favour: nor what grounds we have to believe, that he, who with a mighty hand and out-stretched arm, wrought their deliverance from *Egyptian bondage*, was the same divine agent that, in *the fulness of time*, was sent with the offer of a more *plenteous redemption*. We need only observe, that from the commencement of their œconomy to its complete establishment, they experienced every

\* Gen. xii. 3. xviii. 18. xxii. 18.

provi-

providential interposition that the circumstances of their case required; all tending to impress their minds with an awful reverence for that name which is *great, wonderful, and holy*; all directed to enforce an inviolable adherence to those religious rites and institutions, which were equally appointed to be the *tests* of their obedience, and to *prefigure* a more precious sacrifice that was to come.

But in their prosperity they forgat God, and the scenes that followed were of a different cast, being for many ages alternately composed of desertions to idolatry, and returns to duty; of guilt and contrition; of captivity and deliverance; of vindictive justice, and pardoning goodness. In every thing was the hand of heaven clear and manifest. The very calamities, that were deservedly inflicted on *this particular* people, were made subservient to the production of *general* happiness, by diffusing the knowledge of the *only true God*, through the several places of their captivity.—It was owing to one of these revolutions in their government, that the sacred Books of the Old Testament were translated into a language which was universally under-

understood by the learned world. As this work was undertaken at the request of a great and learned prince \*; and the performance received with the honour and respect that were due to the divine authority of the original; the fame of it may be supposed to reach wherever the language itself was known: and the Greeks especially, whose curiosity in searching after new systems was at all times remarkable, would not fail to examine these divine records with all that critical sagacity which composed their character. But how strongly must their attention have been engaged, when they found the entire conquest of the Persian monarchy, exactly foretold in one of the prophetic books †, which had so lately been gained by the valour of their countrymen?— And may we not presume, that the accomplishment of this extraordinary event, would naturally procure some credit to the many predictions of the other prophets? Would a curiosity like theirs overlook the lofty and

\* Ptolemy Philadelphus, king of Egypt, who caused the Septuagint translation of the Old Testament to have been made, about the year of the world 4430. Before the Christian æra 284.

† Daniel vii. & alibi.

figurative expressions in which the kingdom of the Messiah was described? or remain indifferent to an event in which every nation upon earth was to be concerned? It is certain they did not; since to this freedom of access to the sacred oracles of God, so providentially opened to the Gentiles, and to this only, must be imputed the numerous proselytes that were every where gained over to the Jewish religion. And how naturally did this prepare the way for the introduction of a more reasonable service? For the *converts* to Judaism were neither so much interested in the supposed *temporal* dominion of the Messiah as the *Jews*, who assumed it to themselves as a *local* privilege: nor was *their* sense of the Mosaic and Prophetic writings so perverted by the wrong interpretations of the Scribes and Pharisees, who had vainly arrogated the key of all knowledge, and the explanation of every dark sentence. And hence we may account for that readiness to embrace the gracious conditions of the gospel, when the fulness of the time did come, so much more remarkable among the Gentiles, than among the inhabitants of Judea, where our Saviour *began* his ministry,

ministry, and to whom the important ends of his mission were to be first declared.

And now, every thing was ready and prepared for the full accomplishment of this happy event under the Jewish dispensation. Their second temple was rebuilt, their daily sacrifice restored, the knowledge of God was spread abroad, and their city become the usual resort, at their solemn festivals, for proselytes of all nations under heaven. But it had well nigh filled up the measure of its iniquities, *bad killed the prophets, and stoned them that were sent unto them*: yet as the judgments of God are true and righteous altogether, it might be expedient, that the last overtures of pardon and peace should soon be made to a sinful and stubborn generation, by him who was much more than a prophet; that at least the *remnant might be saved*, who knew the time of their visitation, before they should be involved in one common destruction! And indeed the sad catastrophe that speedily befel both city and country, seems only to have been suspended for this reason; and that its nearer approach might be more strongly marked by our Saviour's prediction, whilst the surviving

part

part of that unhappy people, still preserved, unmixed, unsettled, and retaining their original character, have served to convey through every age and nation, a living testimony of his divine mission.

But the fitness of the time, when God sent forth his Son, will further appear from considering the then state and condition of things in the Pagan world,

At the commencement of this great æra, the supreme dominion of the most civilized parts of the earth was vested in the Romans; to whom Judea itself was become a tributary province, though gratified with a reservation of some share of the civil authority. This extensive empire, acquired as much by their policy as their power, the Romans had hitherto maintained by their clemency and good government.—Their laws were rather granted to the conquered, as a *privilege*, than imposed on them as a *yoke*: but with regard to religion, they generally left that as they found it: at least they had not yet compelled men to fall down and worship the imperial statue which they afterwards set up. A point of mode-

moderation particularly favourable to the reception of christianity. They were then also at peace with the rest of the world ; by which mankind were at leisure to devote their attention to any serious enquiry, and all obstacles to a mutual exchange of sentiments removed by a free and open communication between the several provinces and the seat of the empire. The Jews themselves were at this juncture a commercial people, and had made considerable settlements both in Italy, and the maritime parts of Greece and Syria : so that no extraordinary event could happen in Judea, but an account of it would be readily transmitted to the most distant parts. At this period too, the Romans were no less respectable for their *learning* than their *power*, and, if less *sagacious* than the Greeks, they were however more *solid*. But the truths that our Saviour was about to publish, the miracles he was to work, and the example he was to set, were proof against the inquisition of both these qualities. Falshood will avail itself of ignorance ; and imposture of credulity : but truth only can abide the torture of free enquiry, and stand the examination of a sound as well as penetrating judgment.

ment. Well therefore might it be deemed the fittest time with infinite wisdom to send *him*, who was *the truth and the life*; when the world was sufficiently qualified to examine and try the reasonableness of his doctrines; but yet could attain to no kind of certainty on points the most interesting to human happiness, except it *had been revealed to them from above*. It must however be acknowledged, that the *moral* systems of the heathen world were truly excellent in comparison of their religious principles; affording us a clear proof to what sublime heights the human powers can soar in speculation, and how low they fall in practice; yet still they were *but systems*; laws without sanctions, precepts without authority, and rules without restraint. Erected also on the loose, unsettled foundation of human opinion, they were often shaken by the discordant notions of the philosophers themselves, and generally left with large openings for the impure indulgence of sense and appetite. Even those parts that were the most splendid and beautiful, were seldom founded on stronger motives than the amiableness of virtue, and the abstracted fitness of things—motives which yield but a feeble support

support to the mind in the day of adversity, and have been justly exclaimed against as more shadowy than substantial.

Thus did *their morality* stand alone, and unsupported by the sanctions that were necessary to enforce its obligation ; whilst the indecency, the absurdity, the inhumanity also of their religious institutions, rather tended to confound that natural sense of good and evil ; to corrupt that shoot from the tree of knowledge, which the author of wisdom hath planted in the minds of all his rational creatures, than to cultivate, and enable it to bring forth fruit to perfection. But, if these were times of ignorance that God was pleased to wink at, it sufficiently shews the fulness of the time to be come for a general revelation of the divine will ; when the very nations, who valued themselves so much upon their high attainments in knowledge and the arts of civil life, as to account all the rest of the world barbarians ; appear to have retained such illiberal sentiments of the Deity, and such superstitious forms of worship, as differed little from those of the most savage and uncivilized people, except in the pomp and splendor of

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their ceremonies. Both indeed worshipped they knew not what: the time was now come, when they were to be taught, to worship the Father in spirit, and in truth \*.

Here then let us pause!—And whilst with the warmest gratitude we pour forth our tribute of praise and thanksgiving to him who hath called us out of darkness into his marvellous light, let us neither be so wise in our own conceits as to deny the necessity of any revelation; nor so weak, as to perplex ourselves with difficulties, why this most clear discovery of the divine will should have been withheld from the world so long. Happy as we are in the glorious prospects which it opens to us, let us with all humility pursue both the means and the end of a dispensation that had infinite goodness for its motive, and infinite wisdom for its direction. These perfections of the Deity are actuated not by views of partial, but of general, good. The most extensive human knowledge hath bounds which it cannot pass—sees but in part, and prophesies in part. It is God only, in whose sight a thousand years are but as yesterday, that

\* John iv. 24.

can pervade the remotest parts of futurity, can adjust and dispose his several dispensations to their respective occasions, and clearly perceive what advantages will result from their appointment at one period of time preferably to another.—As well may we ask, why the life of man is not now protracted to the same extent of duration as in the first ages of the world, as to ask, why the hopes of a happy eternity are assured to *us*, which were but faintly, if at all, revealed to them? As well may we ask, why so many useful and amazing discoveries have been lately made in the works of nature, that were beyond the discernment of our most sagacious ancestors?—But to remove every difficulty of this kind, let it be considered, that, though the *perfect* knowledge of our redemption was *long* withheld from mankind, the *benefits* of it were *never* withheld. The merits of Christ's all-sufficient sacrifice commenced with time, and will reach to eternity. The just, who lived by faith, will inherit the promise; and they, who sincerely acted up to the degrees of *natural* light afforded them, we may charitably hope will hereafter be rewarded with a proportionate share of bliss and happiness.

X 2

Now

*Now to him that is of power to establish us according to the revelation of the mystery which was kept secret since the world began, but now is made manifest to all nations for obedience of faith—to God only wise be all praise and glory through Jesus Christ, for ever\*. Amen.*

\* Rom. xvi. 25, 26, 27. Partim.

SER-

## SERMON XX.

THE SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED.

GAL. iv. 4, 5.

*When the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.*

THE sentiments which at all times, but more especially at the annual returns of this holy season, will naturally arise in the mind of every sincere Christian, are those of gratitude, thanksgiving and love, for that amazing instance of divine goodness, which was manifested to the world by the incarnation and birth of Christ, the only begotten Son of God.

Of the truth of this gracious dispensation we have, even at this distance of time, all the evidence that the nature of the event is capable of, and a reasonable mind can require. We have not now indeed a messenger from heaven, as the shepherds had, to proclaim the glad *tidings of great joy* which the birth of Christ should bring to all people. It is not given us to hear the harmonious choir of angels, chanting *glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, good will towards men* \*. We have not, with the wise men of the east, a *star* to conduct us to the *place where the child lay*, that we may *go and worship him*—but we happily live at a time when we behold the *glory of the Lord* shining in every page of his *everlasting gospel*—when the *Gentiles have come to his light*, and *kings to the brightness of his rising* †; when whatsoever we now want of the evidence of sense, is amply made up to us by the gradual accomplishment of many remarkable predictions that were previous, as well as subsequent, to the glorious event of this day: and if those were sufficient to raise and strengthen the hopes of mankind, that some extraordinary person *was to come forth*

\* Luke ii. 14.

† Isaiah ix. 3.

from

from God; *these*, surely, cannot be less effectual to confirm our faith in him, now he *is* come.

That the most proper period of time, for the manifestation of this great *mystery of godliness*, was fixed by divine appointment, is clearly intimated by the Apostle in the former part of the text: for *when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son*. And upon this part I have heretofore treated on a similar occasion, with a view to vindicate so much of this gracious dispensation, as relates to the particular time wherein Christ came into the world, by considering the then circumstances of the Jewish people in *particular*, and the civil as well as moral state of the world in *general*. In speaking to the remaining part of the subject, I shall not enter further into the Apostle's argument, which is finely adapted to the point he had in view, of correcting the mistakes of his judaizing converts; than to observe, from the passage before us, how the *wisdom* of God is displayed in the manner of sending forth his Son, as *made of a woman and made under the law*; and likewise his *goodness* in the gracious *end and*

*purpose for which he did send him ; to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.*

But, in considering this subject, far be it from me to attempt to explain *how* the eternal Son of God was *made of a woman* ; or by what mode of connexion the two distinct natures of God and man were united in the person of Christ !—Too many are the heresies, too gross the superstition, and too fatal the divisions, which a presumptuous inquiry into these mysterious points have already produced in the christian world. If the virgin herself, unable to comprehend, ventured to inquire, *how this could be?* the reply of the angel, which satisfied her doubt, should likewise remove *our* scruples.—“ *With God nothing is impossible.*”

Admitting then, that whatever infinite wisdom proposeth as an *end*, will certainly be accomplished by the *fittest means* ; on this concession, we may briefly inquire, whether there does not appear, to every reasonable mind, a fitness and propriety in the manner of conducting this merciful dispensation, sufficient for

for all the purposes of establishing our faith, and regulating our practice?

And here we may observe, that, although the grounds and reasons of God's proceedings are utterly impenetrable to the wisest of his creatures, (for *he chargeth even his angels with folly* \*,) he may notwithstanding be pleased sometimes to reveal, and at other times to leave them to be discovered by their effects: but, in either case, if they visibly tend to the advancement of human happiness, we are led to acknowledge, that *this hath God done, and must perceive that it is his work.*

Thus, if we seriously review the history of man's redemption, which begins with the creation, and will end only with the dissolution of the world, we plainly discern such a perfect consistency and fitness in all that the sacred writings reveal to us of its rise and progress, as clearly manifest the pure source of mercy and truth from whence they flow. Faint and feeble as its rays appear, at the first dawn of revelation, they gradually increase as our inquiries into the scripture advance; and,

• Job iv. 18.

although

although sometimes over-shadowed with types and figures, or covered with the veil of prophetic allegory, we are nevertheless soon *brought out of darkness* by that *marvellous light* which the later prophets and the evangelists throw upon every part of the subject. Hence the inspired authors of the *New Testament* may be said to present us with a key that opens and unfolds the grand design of Providence that runs through all the extraordinary events, predictions, types and promises, contained in the *Old*; and it is by mutually illustrating each other, that the veracity of both is confirmed, and their respective meaning better understood.

Thus, in regard to that part of the Christian Dispensation we are now considering, as the *Old Testament* instructs us how God in the beginning of time created all things, and gave them a law which should not be broken; and how the first of the human race fell from their obedience to that law, and forfeited their immortality; so the *New* informs us to what person in the Godhead this creative power was committed—that it was his eternal Son by whom God made the world, and who there-

therefore was pleased when forfeited by sin, to undertake the redemption of it. Accordingly in the Old Testament is given an early but mysterious promise, that *the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head*\*: and the New explains how this promise was fulfilled, by the Son of God being manifested in the flesh to destroy the works of the devil †. One prophet had foretold, that *a woman should compass a man* ‡; another, that *a virgin should conceive and bear a son* §. The evangelists relate the miraculous manner of the virgin's conception, and give the most exact and circumstantial evidence of the birth of that son: and, as those had it revealed to them that the Messiah was to descend from Abraham and David, so these plainly demonstrate, by an accurate deduction of pedigree, that, in respect of his human nature, he was *the seed of Abraham, and of the house and lineage of David*. In a word, both the appointed time and place of Christ's coming into the world, alluded to in the prophetic writings, are in the gospel realized by the event: and though it was by an extraordi-

\* Gen. iii. 15.    † 1 John iii. 8.    ‡ Jer. xxxi. 22.

§ Isaiah vii. 14.

nary conjuncture of circumstances that he happened to be born at Bethlehem, a place remote from the residence of his reputed parents; yet the very occasion of their repairing thither, in obedience to the decree of the emperor Augustus, became the means of verifying a very early prediction, that the *scepter* was departed from *Judah*, and a *lawgiver* from *between his feet* \*, when *Shiloh* came,

With these and many other divine attestations, *God sent forth his Son made of a woman*; and not only so, but, that a fitness and propriety might appear throughout the whole of this merciful dispensation, he was *made under the law*; became subject to the *discipline*, obedient to the *precepts*, and liable to death; the *penalty* of that very law, which he himself, by virtue of the compact with his chosen people, as their sovereign Lord and King, had solemnly enacted and enjoined. But the temporary sanctions and ceremonies, of that particular covenant, having now answered the end of their institution; and Christ being come to erect his spiritual and universal kingdom; it *became* him, as he declared, *to fulfil*

\* Gen. xlix. 10.

*all righteousness*, by a perfect obedience to both the moral and ceremonial law; which he could not otherwise do than by being made man; in order to redeem his *peculiar people* from the yoke and burthen of the one, and mankind in general from the sentence pronounced by the other, by tasting death for every man.

Do not however imagine, that all was mere unconditional favour on Christ's part, and nothing to be done, no duties to be performed on the part of man. A merciful dispensation was indeed to succeed one that was rigorous; and a sincere, though imperfect obedience—a sorrow for sin,—a love of virtue, and a firm reliance on the divine promises, were graciously declared to be the terms of our acceptance with God, through the mediation of his Son, instead of an absolute and exact performance of duty. But if *mercy thus rejoiced against judgment*, this is far from implying that we may *continue in sin that grace may abound*; or, that the more we rely on the mercy of God, the more we magnify the merits of Christ, since every step in the œconomy of grace tended no less to inculcate the

*necessity*

necessity of moral virtue, than to crown the practice of it with endless happiness.

For we are to observe, that it was to instruct and reform as well as to redeem the world, that *God sent forth his Son*; and, if we consider what he came to do, and to suffer, it must on every view appear expedient, that he should be made man; that by appealing to the reason of mankind for the truth of his doctrine, and to their affections for the greatness of his love, a proper foundation might be laid both for faith in his merits, and obedience to his commands. Thus coming as he did *to seek and to save that which was lost*, to enlighten the understanding and to immortalize the nature of man, he embraced every occasion, improved every incident, resolved every question, so as to explain and enforce both the duty and dignity of human nature; instructing his followers in the pure and spiritual worship due to God; in the just and friendly offices they owed to each other: drawing their minds off from all selfish and low pursuits of worldly objects, and exciting them to those high attainments in virtue and moral goodness, which would render

der them meet to be accounted *the children* of their *Father who was in heaven*.—His divinity thus covered under the veil of humanity, he could familiarly converse with, and instruct persons of all ranks and dispositions; and it could not but leave a favourable impression upon the mind of every candid observer, beside the irresistible conviction that sprung from his miracles, that the whole practice of his life, in every thing he did, was strictly conformable to the principles he taught.—Blessed will they be who follow his example, though with very unequal steps!

Nor was it more expedient that Christ should take our nature upon him and be made man, to instruct the world *in righteousness*, than to offer himself a propitiatory sacrifice for the *sins* of the world.

Whatever was the origin of sacrifices and offerings for sin, whether they were instituted by divine appointment, immediately after the fall, as a temporary satisfaction for the instant death of the first, and other subsequent offenders, it is certain they could have no merit in themselves but what they derived from a reference

reference to this last and *only effectual sacrifice*. And hence we learn, why Christ was, in the eternal mind, *the lamb slain from the foundation of the world*: and why, under the law, *without shedding of blood there was no remission*.—But Christ in his divine nature could not suffer: in his human nature, in the *body* that was *prepared* for him, he could not only suffer, but, what must render his sufferings infinitely meritorious, after doing the whole will of God, and perfecting the obedience that all mankind had failed in, he voluntarily submitted to death, the penalty of our transgressions; that he might reconcile us to God, and recover for us the forfeited gift of *eternal life*.

And here we have another, and that the most interesting proof, of divine wisdom in the method of conducting this gracious dispensation: for had not Christ been made, though in a miraculous manner, of the substance of a woman, as he could not have lived for our instruction, nor died for our redemption; so neither could he have risen again for our justification. Whereas by completing the plan of our salvation with this glorious

act

act of omnipotence, every other article of our faith.—His immaculate conception, his most holy life, his meritorious death, the immortality of the soul, the resurrection of the body, and his coming again to judgment, have received so strong a confirmation, that they must first call in question the power, the wisdom and goodness of God, before they can reject the evidence for the truth of Christianity; and maintain, that those perfections of the Deity had no concern, either in the manner of Christ's coming into the world, or the merciful purposes for which he did come.

It is true *he came unto his own*, and *his own received him not*\*: but how dearly the Jews paid for rejecting him, though not more so than their own dreadful imprecation drew upon them, their suffering posterity as yet exhibit a most wonderful proof. And, after all, will human wisdom, will that infatuated people, say, what *other manner* could so well have answered the *general end* of the Messiah's coming, which was, *to seek and to save that which was lost*†?—Would they have had him come in thunderings and earthquakes,

\* John i. 11.

† Luke xix. 10.

and all the terrors of omnipotence, as when he gave the law to the Israelites in the wilderness?—But how soon were those awful impressions effaced, and the spirit and intention of that law perverted!—Would they have had him come with the power and splendor of a mighty conqueror, that was to subdue the nations around them, and to *tread down their enemies on every side?* This they certainly looked for; but this, alas! would have been to *destroy mens lives* and not to *save them*; nor can it be supposed, that the world would have been more happy under a Jewish, than a Roman yoke: or, would they have seen him descend from heaven in the full display of glory *which he had with the Father before the world began*\*? In such a manner he could, no doubt, have manifested himself to mankind; and he gave an illustrious instance of his power in this respect; when, during his transfiguration on the mount, his *countenance shone as the sun*, and his *raiment became white as snow*†: But what effect could the Messiah's public appearance, in this form, have had on the minds of men, but either to pro-

\* John xvii. 5.  
Luke ix. 28.

† Matt. xvii. 2. Mark ix. 2.

duce an *irresistible* conviction of his divinity, or to confound and astonish their reason, as we find it did his most intimate disciples at the time; without supplying the *rational* means of faith and conviction, for that and every nation under heaven, to the *end of time*?

And thus we see, even from these obvious considerations, with what perfect wisdom, and consistency of design, *God sent forth his Son made of a woman*: who, with infinite goodness, submitting to such an amazing humiliation, hath fulfilled all that the prophets had spoken of him, hath bruised the serpent's head, triumphed over death and the grave, set open the gates of immortality, and by teaching us how to purify our nature, hath delivered us from *death eternal*; and rescued us from the bondage of corruption, into the glorious liberty of the children of God\*.

Here, then, is the accomplishment of an end most worthy the interposition of that infinitely wise and good Being, who so graciously undertook it. And what a glorious

\* Rom. viii. 21.

prospect, what an eternal source of comfort and joy doth it open to us to be assured, that we have now *an advocate with the Father Jesus Christ the righteous*, who is *the propitiation for our sins* \*, and through whom we have *received the adoption of sons*. Well might the divine Apostle cry out in a rapture of gratitude, *Behold! what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God* †;—that *we*, who might *say to corruption, thou art my father, and to the womb thou art my mother* ‡, should be begotten again to a lively hope of an inheritance, incorruptible, undefiled, and reserved in heaven for us;—that *we*, who were *aliens from the commonwealth of Israel*, should no longer be *strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God* §! In short, that *we, who by nature were the children of wrath, should by grace become the children of God* ||; and, as our Apostle well argues, *if children, then heirs—heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ* ¶!—These, surely, are privileges so transcendantly great, as ought to inspire every one with a most ardent zeal

\* 1 John ii. 1.      † Ibid. iii. 1.      ‡ Job xvii. 14.

§ Ephes. ii. 19.      || Office of Baptism.      ¶ Rom. viii. 17.

to deserve and enjoy them ; they are privileges too from which none are excluded ; but which all, both high and low, both rich and poor, are freely allowed to aspire after and to possess.

Happy then shall we be, if from a due sense of the inestimable benefits of our adoption, we sincerely pay the obedience of sons in this life ; and everlastingly happy, when, at Christ's second coming to judge the world in righteousness, he who *was in all things made like unto us*, sin only excepted, shall not be ashamed to *call us his brethren* \* ; but shall acknowledge us as such, with his own gracious invitation, of *Come, ye blessed children of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you, from the foundation of the world* † !

\* Heb. ii. 12.

† Matt. xxv. 34.

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Many species are already well established, and probably in more than enough numbers to shed and increase each year. The only species of *Leucolla* which may have been

and a night I had over it I thought that  
I should be rendered old and foolish and  
that I should be a burden to you. You  
are very good and thoughtful and you  
know what is best for me. I am not  
so old as you think and I am not  
so foolish as you think. I am not  
so ignorant now as then. I am not so  
weak as you think. I am not so  
old as you think. I am not so  
foolish as you think. I am not so  
ignorant now as then. I am not so  
weak as you think. I am not so

19. *Leucosia* *leucostoma* *leucostoma* *leucostoma* *leucostoma*

## SERMON XXI.

THE LOVE OF GOD IN SENDING HIS ONLY-BEGOTTEN SON, CONSIDERED AS A MOTIVE TO CHRISTIAN BENEVOLENCE.

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I JOHN iv. 9.

*In this was manifested the love of God towards us, because that God sent his only-begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him.*

THIS passage of scripture, like many others delivered by our blessed Lord himself, involves in it the gracious end and design of the christian dispensation. It displays the immensity of the love of God to man—it exhibits the most convincing proof of that love—it points out the inestimable benefits that may be derived from it, and proposes the reasonable conditions on which those benefits may be obtained.

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We must not, however, suppose that this love of God so manifested to the world, was that kind of love which sprung from approbation; for the world was *dead in trespasses and sins*, and was *altogether become abominable*: but it was love founded on *compassion*, on the tender mercies of God, who was *not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance* \*. Accordingly what St. John asserts in the text, is founded on the declaration of our Saviour himself—*God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him, should not perish, but have everlasting life* †.

How comfortably must these assurances sound in the ears of all the frail and forfeited posterity of Adam! and what *tidings of great joy* do they bring to *all people*, who know that *unto them was born, as on this day* ‡, *a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord!* You, my brethren, will now hear them, as I trust you often have done, with a pious gratitude; and it shall be

\* 2 Peter iii. 9.

† John iii. 16.

‡ The Nativity of the Prince of Peace; commonly called Christmas-day.

my business, in order to confirm your religious impressions, briefly and plainly to set before you: First, In what an extraordinary manner; and secondly, For what a merciful purpose, the love of God was manifested to us.—*He sent his only begotten Son into the world that we might live through him.*

I. Various are the ways by which the love of God to man might be illustrated and proved—by the divine image after which he was created—by the rank given him in the scale of earthly beings—by the bountiful provision for the gratification of his sensual appetites—by the powers of reason and liberty where-with he is endued—and by being made capable of religious adoration, with a consciousness of the rectitude or depravity of his conduct. Even when mankind had so perverted their ways that their hearts were set in them *to do evil continually*, God was graciously pleased, *at sundry times and in divers manners to speak to*, and endeavour to reclaim them *by his prophets*. But when all such merciful interpositions failed of producing their proper effect, it pleased God, *in the fulness of time*, to send his only begotten Son, as

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the king did in the parable, to his rebellious subjects; not, indeed, with a splendid train of attendants, adorned with titles of honour and ensigns of dignity, as earthly princes do: but in a mean and humble state, in the form of a servant, *to minister, and not be ministered unto*\*; nay, to be *despised, rejected, a man of sorrows, acquainted with grief, smitten of God*†, and submitting to die, that *we might not die eternally*. This surely was the greatest instance of divine love that could be shewn to a sinful world. Thus was the only begotten Son of God sent into this world: into this most imperfect state of things where, to *many*, their delights are few, and their troubles numerous; where, to *all of us*, a little pain destroys the relish of the greatest pleasure: where hunger and thirst, nay, even plenty and fulness, often make us miserable: where we are often flattered with false hopes, and dejected by groundless fears: where an indisposition of body casts a cloud over the mind, and a depression of spirits frequently impairs and consumes the vigour of both: where, in short, outward accidents, and inward infirmities, are perpetually forming a conspiracy against our

\* Matt. xx, 28.

† Isaiah liii. 3, 4.

happiness, at a time perhaps when we are least prepared to oppose and defeat them.

And was *such* a world a fit receptacle for our Lord and Saviour! Could the king of heaven condescend to empty himself of his glory which he had with the Almighty from the beginning, and to dwell in this vale of misery? to have not only the *common* wants and infirmities of nature to struggle with, but to suffer afflictions which were *uncommon*, which were even *peculiar* to him: and the merit of all this enhanced, by the consideration of those blissful regions, which he voluntarily left in order to suffer them? We all know that, with those who pass from a state of want, and pain, and wretchedness, to a state of affluence, ease, and happiness, the remembrance of their *former sufferings*, is softened by the sense of their *present enjoyments*; whereas to fall from the highest bliss into the very depth of misery, is to be doubly miserable; inasmuch as the recollection of what is past, aggravates the evils we now suffer.—And does not this observation apply to the case of our blessed Lord? and lead us truly to estimate, if indeed it be possible to estimate, the infinite

infinite love of God, and the amazing goodness and condescension of his beloved Son? Can we possibly conceive any two conditions to be more widely different than what he *possessed in heaven*, and that which he *submitted to on earth*?—The mind of every serious christian cannot but be raised to the highest pitch of ecstacy and gratitude, as often as he religiously contemplates the *exceeding riches of the grace of God*\* thus shewn to sinful man. It is a noble and solemn appeal of the royal psalmist to the sense of mankind, when he asks, *who is like unto the Lord our God, who hath his dwelling on high, and yet humbleth himself to behold the things that are in heaven and earth*†? This, indeed, shews the kindness and care of Providence over all his works; but what is this to that infinitely superior care and concern which he manifested in sending his only begotten Son into this lower world? Who, although he dwelled on high in the bosom of his Father, where neither sorrow, nor pain, nor evil can enter, and where thousands and ten thousands of angels paid a cheerful obedience to his commands; yet, nevertheless, willingly exchanged

\* Ephes. ii. 7.

† Psalm cxiii. 6.

his celestial mansions, his wide empire over all the host of heaven, to instruct, to reform, and to save an ungrateful world, that did not even offer him a place *where to lay his head!*

II. But our admiration of the divine love will be still further heightened, by considering in the second place, for what end, and on whose account it was that God *sent his only-begotten Son into the world*; and this was, for so the text declares, *that we might live through him*; — *that we*, who by reason of our disobedience were enemies to him, and whose behaviour was so far from deserving so much love and compassion, that it rather deserved his displeasure and vengeance, might, notwithstanding, through his all-sufficient merits, and a sincere though imperfect obedience to his precepts, be raised *from the death of sin to a life of righteousness* \*. It is not uncommon in scripture language, to express a state and habit of *sin* by *death*; as, on the other hand, to mean by *life*, the being *born again*, and putting on *new habits* of virtue. In this manner did our Saviour express himself, to the surprise of Nicodemus; *Marve*

\* Burial Office.

*not*

*not that I said unto thee, ye must be born again\*.*  
Hence we are said to be quickened by repentance, who were dead in trespasses and sins †; agreeably to which, St. Paul bids the Roman converts reckon themselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ ‡.

But the more general and popular meaning of these and such like expressions is, that we, on account of Christ's merits, should not die eternally, but be put into a condition of recovering the forfeited gift of immortal life; which is frequently mentioned in scripture as the happy effect of Christ's coming into the world. And surely, in this view, we have so glorious a manifestation of the divine love, as should call forth all the powers of our souls to admire and praise the gracious author of it. That God should effect an end so beneficial to us, by means so condescending on his part, is a lesson of humility and thankfulness to men and angels. Immortality, or a passing from pain and death into a state of endless felicity, has ever been the ardent wish, the

\* John iii. 7.      † Ephes. ii. 1.      ‡ Rom. vi. 11.  
inex-

inextinguishable desire of the human mind: it is that fountain of living water, which the thirsty soul ever gasped after, and which alone can satisfy the laudable ambition of a generous and exalted nature; but which was never clearly revealed until Christ himself *brought it to light*. To be continually advancing in our progress towards a glorious eternity; to be able to enlarge our prospects beyond the scanty bounds of sense; to behold, with the eye of faith, the inexhaustible source of endless and improving happiness; to have all our mistaken notions corrected, our knowledge enlarged, the ways of Providence unfolded, the infinite perfections of the divine nature displayed, and every thing prompting us to join with angels and archangels in songs of praise and thanksgiving, are *blessings* devoutly to be wished—a *hope* stedfastly to be cherished—a *promise* gratefully to be received: the most capacious mind can conceive nothing *greater*, nothing *equal*; and can only adore the goodness of God, who, by the birth of his Son, gave birth likewise to this most comfortable hope and expectation of being *begotten again to an inheritance incorruptible, and that*

*that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for us\*.*

And now, having briefly considered some of the many instances that might be produced, whereby the love of God is manifested to us in the Christian Dispensation, what return shall we make for it, or, in what manner shall we *praise the Lord for his goodness, and declare the wonders he hath done for the children of men* †! And here the love of God constraineth us to pay that debt in kind, or by a return of love, as we cannot properly discharge it any other way: for they, as our Saviour observes, ought to *love much, to whom much is forgiven* ‡. Hence it naturally follows that we ought to *love God with all our heart, with all our soul, and with all our strength*: for although we cannot be profitable, we may, and ought to be *grateful* to him. But the best, and only way of shewing that we *really* love God is, by *keeping his commandments*. And yet there are some duties that more immediately and visibly, as it were, declare and *manifest our love* to him; such as

\* *1 Pet. i. 4, 5.* † *Psalm cviii. 4.* ‡ *Luke vii. 47.*

praise

praise and thanksgiving, with a public acknowledgment and remembrance of all that Christ did and suffered for us. Very properly, therefore, does the wisdom of the church often and earnestly invite you, my brethren, upon this sacred day especially, to the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, which was instituted and ordained, for the very purpose of most devoutly contemplating the infinite love of God, and shewing a grateful remembrance of the all-sufficient merits of Christ.—Here then, at his holy table, let the pride of human wisdom be debased, and devotion exalted. Here let the remembrance of a dying Saviour, shadowed out to us by the visible elements of *bread broken, and wine poured out*, lead our thoughts back to the same Saviour *coming* into the world for our instruction, and dying for our justification. His *birth*, and his *death*, form the two extremities of that everlasting *chain* of divine love, which unites every repenting sinner to the *mercy-seat* of God.

But there is another inference, which St. John himself draws from the text. *Beloved,* says he, *if God so loved us, we ought also to*

*love one another\*.* This, indeed, is what the Apostle lays down, as the only sure test of our loving God at all: since if we love not our brethren whom we have seen, how, says he, can we love God whom we have not seen? And doth not Christ himself expressly declare, that, except we have love one to another, we cannot be his disciples?—It is not by consanguinity only, or affinity, that we are to deem ourselves brethren: we are so by nature, by grace; by partaking of one faith, one hope, one baptism: by having one God and Father of us all, who is in all, and through all†; for in him we all live, and move, and have our being.—We must love, therefore, as brethren; and each of us give such proofs of our love as our respective stations and abilities may require: they that are in honour, by condescending to them of low degree; and they that are rich, by shewing mercy to the poor—to those especially, and, at this good season, more bountifully, to those whose merits are as visible as their wants: who may have once seen happy days of plenty, and chearfully dispensed that benevolence to others, which they themselves now stand

\* 1 John iv. 11.

† Ephes. iv. 6.

in need of. In a word, to maintain the christian character, we must be *kindly affectionate one to another*, and *live peaceably with all men*, putting away from us all *bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil-speaking, with all malice*—being *kind one to another*; *tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven us*; ever remembering how the love of God was manifested towards us, by sending his only begotten Son into the world that we might live through him.

THE END OF VOL. I.

in 1897. It is now in the British Museum. The author of the book is unknown, but it is believed to be the work of a man named John Smith, who was a member of the Royal Society. The book is written in Latin and contains many illustrations. The title page is as follows:

THE END OF APE

